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The Graphic Art Consciousness Of

Sir Walter Scott

THE GRAPHIC ART CONSCIOUSNESS OF
SIR WALTER SCOTT

BY

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A.B. Earlham College, 1913

THESIS

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THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

June 1 1916

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY SUPER-
VISION BY Thomas Blaine Stanley
ENTITLED The Graphic Art Consciousness of
Sir Walter Scott

BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF Master of Arts in English
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Recommendation concurred in:*

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on
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*Required for doctor's degree but not for master's.

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Foreword.

In several passages of the writings of Sir Walter Scott are found statements disclaiming technical knowledge of graphic art. This paper is the record of an investigation made to discover whether there is not evidence to be set over against Scott's personal disclaimer, - evidence either showing that the great novelist knew more of the principles of graphic art than his humility allowed him to own,¹ or indicating the possession on his part of instinctive perception in artistic matters of which he was actually unaware. I shall not anticipate the discussion which is to follow, further than to say that the first hypothesis seems the more tenable of the two.

First are taken up Scott's personal statements concerning his general artistic attitude, his training in drawing, his likes and dislikes in art expression, and such biographical material as seems to point to a conclusion upon the question of whether drawing and painting, as well as literary art, were vital interests with him. The material in the first chapter is taken chiefly from Scott's unfinished autobiography (published in the Life, by Lockhart), Lockhart's Life of Sir Walter Scott, Scott's Journal, and his letters, and occasional biographical references in the prefaces and notes to the Waverly Novels.

The remaining chapters take up in detail, references in

¹ Ruskin (Modern Painters, London, 1904, Vol. III, p. 277), speaks of Scott's humility, and of his artistic knowledge.

the original fiction (excluding translation and biography) which point to perception upon Scott's part of four of the main aspects of pictorial art; namely, form, color, light and shade, and pictorial composition. There will be made no attempt in this classification to follow the psychology of aesthetics. The standpoint taken is that of one not without training in drawing and painting, but chiefly a constant admirer and lover of the splendid pageantry and appealing humanness of the Waverly Novels, and the infinitely varied, yet infinitely faithful delineation, in all the fiction of Scott, of

"The lowly train in life's sequestered scene;

The native feelings strong, the guileless ways"

of his countrymen.

I. SCOTT'S ATTITUDE TOWARD ART.

Throughout Scott's writings are many mentions of his desire to learn to draw. Speaking of his feeling for landscape, he says: "I do not by any means infer that I was dead to the feeling of picturesque scenery; on the contrary, few delighted more in its general effect. But I was unable with the eye of a painter to dissect the various parts of the scene, to comprehend how the one bore upon the other, to estimate the effect which various features of the view had in producing its leading and general effect.¹ I have never, indeed, been capable of doing this with precision or nicety, though my latter studies have led me to amend and arrange my original ideas upon the subject. Even the humble ambition, which I long cherished, of making sketches of those places which interested me, from a defect of eye or hand was totally ineffectual. After long study, and many efforts, I was unable to apply the elements of perspective or of shade [light and shade] to the scene before me, and was obliged to relinquish in despair an art which I was most anxious to practice."² That artistic imagination was not lacking, however, is shown by the remainder of the passage: "But show me an old castle on a field of battle, and I was at home at once, filled it with its combatants in their proper costume, and overwhelmed my hearers by the enthusiasm of my description. In crossing Magus Moor, near St. Andrews, the spirit moved me to give a picture of

¹ This passage is, by the way, an excellent statement of the essentials of pictorial composition.

² Lockhart, Life of Sir Walter Scott, Edinburgh, 1902, Volume I. page 53. The italics are my own.

the assassination of the Archbishop of St. Andrews to some fellow-travellers with whom I was accidentally associated, and one of them, though well acquainted with the story, protested my narrative had frightened away his night's sleep. I mention this to show the distinction between a sense of the picturesque in action and in scenery.¹ If I have since been able in poetry to trace with some success the principles of the latter [picturesque in scenery], it has always been with reference to its general and leading features, ***and even this proficiency has cost me study. Meanwhile I endeavoured to make amends for my ignorance of drawing, by adopting a sort of technical memory respecting the scenes I visited."² I know no better term than "technical memory" to describe the faculty by which artists draw from memory. I do not mean to imply from this quotation that Sir Walter really had the ability to draw from memory, but simply that he seems to have had all the requisites except skill of fingers, and that it is possible, in his anxiety to produce actual pictures, that he over-estimated the mere tricks of shade and perspective, forgetting the importance of the ability to select and seize upon the salient features of a scene. That he had this ability can be abundantly proved. "If I have a knack for anything," he said in his later years, "it is for selecting the striking and interesting points out of dull details."³ Lockhart

¹ This statement is, in itself, evidence of rather acute critical perception in artistic matters.

² Lockhart, Life, Vol. I, pp. 53,54

³ Journal, Edinburgh, 1891, p. 510. Scott was at this time (Dec. 1827) fifty-six years of age.

puts this selective ability highest among the characteristics that give Scott's work its charm. "Notwithstanding all that Scott says about the total failure of his attempts in the art of the pencil, I presume few will doubt that they proved very useful to him afterwards; from them it is natural to suppose he caught the habit of analyzing, with some approach at least to accuracy, the scenes over which his eye might have continued to wander with the vague sense of delight. I may add that a longer and more successful practice of the crayon might, I cannot but think, have proved the reverse of serviceable to him as a future painter with the pen. He might have contracted the habit of copying from pictures rather than from nature itself; and we should thus have lost that which constitutes the very highest charm in his delineations of scenery, namely, that the effect is produced by the selection of a few striking features, arranged with a light unconscious grace, neither too much nor too little - equally remote from the barren generalizations of a former age, and the dull, servile fidelity with which so many inferior writers of our time fill in both background and foreground, ***** producing not descriptions but inventories."¹ There is a possibility that some such fear as that which Lockhart expresses crossed Scott's own mind, for at no time do we find record of his keeping up his study of drawing long enough to attain much proficiency. Mr. Irving,² writing of his early comradeship with Scott, says: "I

¹ Lockhart, Life, Vol. I, pp. 139, 140.

² John Irving, the companion of Scott's suburban walks, and his comrade in the love of the strange and marvelous.

attended one summer a class of drawing along with him, but although both fond of it, we found that it took up so much time that we gave this up before we had made much progress."¹ Scott gives in the Journal a later and more particular account of this experience, which emphasizes again the fact that consciously or unconsciously, writing took in his mind precedence over drawing. He says, in part, having spoken humourously of certain "most wretched daubs"² of landscapes in great gilded frames, "of which he had often been heartily ashamed," and of which he thought it would be a "good joke" to circulate the story that they were his own early performances: "True it is that I took lessons of oil painting in youth from a little Jew animalcule, a smouch called Burrell, a clever, sensible creature though; but I could make no progress, either in painting or drawing. Nature denied me correctness of eye and neatness of hand, yet I was very desirous to be a draughtsman, at least, and laboured harder to attain that point than at any other in my recollection, to which I did not make some approaches. Yet Burrell was not useless to me altogether neither; he was a Prussian, and I got from him many a long story of the battles of Frederic. ***** I remember his picturesque account of seeing a party of the Black Hussars bringing in some forage carts which they had taken from a body of the Cossacks, whom he described as lying on the top of the carts of hay, mortally wounded, and, like the Dying Gladiator, eye-

¹ Quoted in Lockhart, Life, Vol. I, p. 137.

² They had been given to him by a certain misguided lady who encouraged their perpetrator. See Journal, p. 137.

ing their own blood as it ran down through the straw."¹ In the relation of this anecdote, with delight, years after it was first told to Scott, the pupil gives ground for the suspicion that what was uppermost in his mind as he studied with the "smouch called Burrell," and later throughout his short and interrupted ² study of drawing, was not interest in picture-making, but interest in the picturesque,— the interest that first caused him to think of drawing as a means of expressing his love for the ancient castles around Edinburgh, and the interest which survives throughout his later work, avowed and strong.

After speaking of his study of painting with Burrell, Scott goes on to say: "I afterwards² took lessons from Walker, whom we used to call Blue Beard. ***** Skirving³ made an admirable likeness of Walker, not a single scar or mark of the smallpox which seamed his countenance, but the too accurate brother of the brush had faithfully laid it down in longitude and latitude. Poor Walker destroyed it. ***** I did learn myself to take some vile views from Nature. When Will Clerk and I lived very much together, I used sometimes to make them under his instruction."⁴ Of one of

¹ Journal, (March, 1826) p. 137.

² A year at least elapsed between the study with Burrell and the next attempt to learn how to draw. Lockhart says, "a year or two later." (Life, Vol. I, p. 138).

³ Archibald Skirving, (1749-1819), a well-known Edinburgh portraitist.

⁴ Journal, pp. 137, 138. Scott speaks often of the patient kindness of his instructor, and of the inspiration, both literary and artistic, which he gained from his association with this gifted man.

these "vile" views Scott speaks in the Journal thus: " Going down to Liddesdale once, I drew the castle of Hermitage in my fashion, and sketched it so accurately that with a few verbal instructions Clerk put it into regular form, Williams (the Grecian)¹ copied over Clerk's, and his drawing was engraved as the frontispiece of the first volume of the Kelso edition, Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border."² In the same passage Sir Walter speaks of this "thrice-transmitted drawing, ***** taken originally" from his sketch, as "extremely like" Hermitage, which neither of his two colleagues in the task had ever seen.³ Lockhart, speaking of the same performance, says: "Nothing can be ruder. ***** Scott used to say, the oddest thing of all was, that the engraving, founded on the labours of three draughtsmen, one of whom could not draw a straight line, and the two others had never seen the place meant to be represented, was nevertheless pronounced by the natives of Liddesdale to give a very fair notion of the ruins of Hermitage."⁴

These anecdotes suggest certain commentaries on Scott's repeated disavowal of technical skill. To say that the study of drawing took "too much time" can mean only that some other pursuit was regarded as more valuable, if not more interesting. When we remember the early literary studies "of which he has given us a copy in the first chapter of Waverly,"⁵ this inference seems more

¹ So called because of his publication of records of travel through Italy and Greece.

² Journal, p. 138.

³ Journal, pp. 138, 139.

⁴ Lockhart, Life, Vol. II, pp. 70, 71.

⁵ Ibid., Vol. I, p. 144

plain. The anecdote of the too faithful likeness of his teacher (Walker) indicates a perception of the minute fidelity which marked the drawings of early portraitists of the days before common photography,- a perception which would be remarkable in a man who had not some knowledge of drawing. But by far the most unmistakable indication that he has, as Lockhart remarks,¹ underestimated his ability, is the incident of the drawing of Hermitage. It would not be remarkable if two experienced artists had made a presentable drawing from the sketch of a tyro; but I will be judged by my readers who have practiced drawing if it is not evidence that the sketch by Scott was accurate, that from it the draughtsmen who had not seen the place were able to make the resulting drawing like.

Indeed, fidelity and accuracy are distinguishing marks of Scott's work either in drawing or description. An interesting account of Scott's fidelity to minute detail is given in Mr. Morritt's² Memorandum. "I had, of course, had many previous opportunities of testing the almost conscientious fidelity of his [Scott's] local descriptions; but I could not help being singularly struck with the lights which this visit threw on that characteristic of his compositions. ***** I observed him noting down even the peculiar little wild flowers and herbs that accidentally grew round and on the side of a bold crag near his intended cave of Guy Denzil; and could not help saying, that as he was not to be upon oath in his work, daisies, violets, and primroses would be as poetical as any of the humble plants he was examining. I laughed, in

¹ Lockhart, Life, Vol. I, p. 142.

² John B. Saurey Morritt, Esq., of Rokeby.

short, at his scrupulousness; but I understood him when he replied, 'that in nature herself no two scenes were exactly alike, and that whoever copied truly what was before his eyes, would possess the same variety in his descriptions, and exhibit apparently an imagination as boundless as the range of nature in the scenes he recorded; whereas - whoever trusted to imagination, would soon find his own mind circumscribed, and contracted to a few favourite images, and the repetition of these would sooner or later produce that very monotony and barrenness which had always haunted descriptive poetry in the hands of any but the patient worshippers of truth. Besides which,' he said, 'local names and peculiarities make a fictitious story look so much better in the face.' In fact, from his boyish habits, he was but half satisfied with the most beautiful scenery when he could not connect with it some local legend, and when I was forced sometimes to confess with the knife-grinder, 'Story! God bless you! I have none to tell, sir' - he would laugh, and say, 'then let us make one - nothing so easy as to make a tradition.'"¹

The passage just quoted would seem to indicate that in art Scott was a realist of the Pre-Raphaelite type, if the most cursory reading of his actual descriptions did not show that instead of making what Lockhart calls "inventories" he used his record of detail as an accomplished sketcher, selecting salient and

¹Quoted in Lockhart, Life, Vol. IV, pp. 17, 18, 19.

interesting points, leaving the non-essential features of the scene to the reader's imagination.¹ He realized fully that the few touches used, if they were to produce the effect of reality, must be typical as well as interesting.

But of what artist of the pencil could it truthfully be said that he was chiefly interested in the legend attached to the scene? It was not so much the outward appearance, as it was the meaning of the picturesque ruins and crags and lonely towers, that interested Scott. Seeking to know their story rather than to trace their form, revelling in their picturesqueness because it took him back to the early days he loved, it is small wonder that he left few statements expressing any sense of loss resulting from his failure to draw. The heart of each scene could be expressed for him but dimly, if at all, in line and color and shade; while in words his enthusiasm² found continual outlet. Scott's characteristic descriptions are in reality but glorified sketches, - a color, a striking touch, a quality suggested, a texture hinted, and the picture glows before us as does this of Mr. Touchwood: "His face, which at a distance of a yard or two seemed hale and smooth, appeared, when closely examined, to be seamed with a million of wrinkles, crossing each other in every direction possible, but as fine as if drawn by the point of a very fine needle."³ Scott

¹ This ability is commented upon in Lockhart, Life, Vol.III, p.56.

² Scott loquitur: "My own enthusiasm, however, was chiefly awakened by the wonderful and terrible." (Lockhart, Life, Vol.I, p.27).

³ St. Ronan's Well, Standard Edition, Boston, 1900, Vol. I, pp. 223, 224. Quoted also in Lockhart, Life, Vol. V, p. 76.

acknowledges, says Lockhart, in a note to St. Ronan's Well, that he took from Platoff [met in Paris after Waterloo] this portrait of Mr. Touchwood; and Lockhart, speaking of the same circumstance, in the Life, adds: "Thus did every little peculiarity remain treasured in his memory, to be used in due time for giving the air of minute reality to some imaginary personage."¹

Further indication of the preponderance of story over form or technique, in Scott's attitude toward forms of art, is not wanting in the reminiscences of his associates. After having spoken of Scott's indifference (technically) to music, Adolphus² says: "I believe he cared little for mere music; the notes failed to charm him if they were not connected with good words, or immediately associated with some history or strong sentiment, upon which his imagination could fasten. A similar observation might, I should conceive, apply to his feeling of other arts. I do not remember any picture or print at Abbotsford which was remarkable merely as a work of colour or design. All, I think, either represented historical, romantic or poetical subjects, or related to persons, places, or circumstances in which he took an interest. Even in architecture his taste had the same bias; almost every stone of his house bore an allusion or suggested a sentiment."³

¹ Lockhart, Life, Vol. V, p. 76,n.

² J.L.Adolphus, author of Letters to Heber, a frequent guest at Abbotsford after August, 1823.

³ Quoted in Lockhart, Life, Vol. VII, p. 172. (Many of Scott's letters written while Abbotsford was in process of construction, record joyfully the acquisition of some storied stone for the mansion. Ruskin, in Modern Painters, severely criticizes Scott's taste in this direction.

At times Scott could be found not only indifferent to, but actually oblivious of visual impressions. Skene¹ relates with amusement this anecdote: "' During Scott's absence,' says his friend, 'his wife had had the tiny drawing-room of the Cottage fitted up with new chintz furniture - everything had been set out in the best style - and she and her girls had been looking forward to the pleasure which they supposed the little surprise of the arrangements would give him. He was received in the spruce fresh room, set himself comfortably down in the chair prepared for him, and remained in the full enjoyment of his own fireside, and a return to his family circle, without the least consciousness that any change had taken place - until, at length, Mrs. Scott's patience could hold out no longer, and his attention was expressly called to it. The vexation he showed at having caused such a disappointment, struck me as amiably characteristic - and in the course of the evening he every now and then threw out some word of admiration to console Mamma.'"² The possible objection that this obliviousness was due to strong mental preoccupation could be answered by considering that the mind under strong inner strain is more likely than not, to seize upon trivial outward aspects of surroundings, than it is to ignore them utterly.

What has already been said, should not, however, be understood literally to mean that Scott knew nothing about graphic art. He had, in fact, abundant knowledge on this subject, although,

¹ James Skene, of Rubislaw, Scott's friend, and the author of Memories of Sir Walter Scott.

² Quoted in Lockhart, Life, Vol. V, pp. 81,82.

certain astonishingly keen critical observations to the contrary notwithstanding, it was general knowledge rather than particular, and was related to knowledge of literary effect, rather than strictly technical. His position is clearly set forth in a conversation with Skene. "Adverting one day to the subject of the Fine Arts, he [Scott] said that he had been reflecting on a conversation that we had formerly had on that topic, and that he considered the remarkable genius that seemed to be more profusely displayed in that branch compared with poetic and oratorical talent to be owing to painting having become more trammelled by the pedantry of criticism, through which imagination and invention were confined within rules of art, than is the case with the other branches. It is common to hear people say that they are not good judges of painting,¹ but this ought not to be so. Every one that has a reasonable share of susceptibility ought to be able to judge of painting² as well as of poetry; if either art fails to grasp the feelings, it is imperfect. It may be imitation, but it is neither painting nor poetry."³ In another passage Skene again reports his friend upon this subject, (the province of imitative art having been under discussion): "Sir Walter considered the main end and object of painting, music, and poetry to be in that respect [in respect to their dependence for success on the influence which they could exercise upon the imagination] the same; that the powers of each of them rested not in

¹ Scott himself is often guilty of making this statement.

² Sir Walter unconsciously assumes that the mission of painting is to affect the emotions, overlooking the fact that it is sometimes judged wholly by its technique.

³ Skene, Memories , pp. 140, 141.

furnishing the subjects of imagination, ready dressed and served up, so much as in those happy and masterly touches which gave play to the imagination, and exerted the fancy to act and paint for itself by skilfully leading it to the formation of lofty conceptions and to the most pleasing exercise of its own attribute. Hence the superior effect to most minds of an ingenious sketch, where a dexterous and clever hint gives being to beauties which the laborious details of painting could never portray."¹ This is as much as to say: Art should stimulate the imagination, not imitate; art fails if it does not touch the feelings.

It is probably his conviction that good art should stimulate the imagination that leads Scott to speak thus of Allan's² sketch of the murder of Archbishop Sharpe: "Allan has made a sketch which I shall take to town with me. ***** The subject is the murder of Archbishop Sharpe on Magus Moor, prodigiously well treated. The savage ferocity of the assassins, crowding one on another to strike at the old prelate on his knees - contrasted with the old man's figure- and that of his daughter endeavouring to interpose for his protection, and withheld by a ruffian of milder mood than his fellows:- the dogged fanatical severity of Rathillet's countenance, who remained on horseback, witnessing, with stern fanaticism, the murder he did not choose to be active in, lest it should be said that he struck out of private revenge - are all amazingly well combined in the sketch. I question if the artist can bring them out with equal

¹ Skene, Memories, pp. 63, 64.

² Sir W. Allan Allan, Esq., a painter in whose work Scott was interested. Allan was President of the Scottish Academy from 1838.

spirit in the painting which he meditates. Sketches give a sort of fire to the imagination of the spectator, who is apt to fancy a great deal more for himself than the pencil, in the finished picture can possibly present to his eye afterwards."¹ There is little here about the actual drawing,- whether it was true, stiff, sparkling, or strong, or what not. The features praised are contrast between ferocity and serenity and innocence in terror; contrasting features "well combined" - that is, combined in a way to emphasize their unlikeness, or, in other words, in a way to stimulate the observer. "Sketches," says the critic, "give a sort of fire to the imagination of the spectator." This is, in a word, his final pronouncement of praise.

Even Scott's rare criticism of drawing as drawing, points indirectly to his conviction that stimulation of the imagination was essential to good art. "The drawings," said he, speaking of Mr. Audubon's drawings of birds, some of which were brought to him by the artist in January, 1827, "are of the first order - the attitudes of the birds of the most animated character, and the situations appropriate; one of a snake attacking a bird's nest, while the birds (the parents) peck at the reptile's eyes - they usually, in the long run, destroy him, says the naturallist. The feathers of these gay little sylphs, most of them from the Southern States, are most brilliant, and are represented with what, were it [not] connected with so much spirit in the attitude, I would call a laborious degree of execution. This extreme correctness is of the utmost

¹Lockhart, Life, Vol. VI, p. 48. This statement, which is quite true, shows a considerable amount of artistic acumen.

consequence to the naturalist, [but] as I think, (having no knowledge of virtu), rather gives a stiffness to the drawings."¹ "The drawings are of the first order"- a bold statement for a man who "knew nothing" of art; but why does he call them so? The characteristic that he praises is striking attitude,-spirit, animation. The chief defect, says the critic, is "stiffness," laborious execution, (though the person unacquainted with drawing is usually first impressed with laborious, hard-fisted precision). In a word, the drawings are striking, and are redeemed, in his decision, from commonness and stiffness by that fact. "There is something about all the fine arts, of soul and spirit, which," Scott observed, after once having confessed the effect which "simple melodies, especially if connected with words or ideas"² had upon him, "like the vital principle in man, defies the research of the most critical anatomist. You feel where it is not, yet you cannot describe what it is you want."² This appears to be reference to the appeal of art to the feelings, to the imagination; technique is forgotten.

The foregoing statements indicate broadly certain fundamentals of Scott's art consciousness. First, his desire to draw grew out of, and subsided into, his passion for the picturesque, which developed very early in his life, and remained to the end a strong and constant factor in his work. Concomitant to his love of the picturesque is the preponderance, in his mind, of the story over the mere scene, beautiful though it may often have been. Secondly, his place as an artist (broadly speaking) is with the roman-

¹ Journal, pp. 344, 345.

² Ibid. p. 6

tic school, though he gave his pictures realism and verisimilitude by telling, concrete touches. Thirdly, and high over all, however, is the definite statement of his artistic platform, made in conversation with Skene.¹ His work shows that this conviction, that the message of art is to the imagination and the feelings, grew stronger as his years passed by.

Scott's work contains many critical passages which make it hard to credit fully his frequent denials of knowledge. "As an amateur, he was a painter of the very highest rank. ***** I should hold him a perfect critic on painting."² "They seem, to my inexperienced eye, to be genuine, or at least good paintings."³ "Went to see the exhibition, - certainly a good one for Scotland - less trash than I have seen at Somerset House. ***** A beautiful thing by Landseer."⁴ "Got Heath's Illustrations, which, I dare say, are finely engraved, but commonplace enough in point of art."⁵ Throughout the Novels, especially in notes and prefaces, are statements of principle and taste, which show thought and artistic judgment.⁶ It is in passages like the following, however, in which Scott himself sums up his views, that we obtain the clearest conception of his attitude.⁷

¹ Quoted above, pp. 12, 13.

² Journal, p. 358 (Of Sir George Beaumont).

³ Ibid. p. 353 (Of Mr. Francis Grant).

⁴ Ibid. p. 358.

⁵ Quoted, Lockhart, Life, Vol. IX, p. 302.

⁶ The episode of Dick Tinto, in The Bride of Lammermoor, is a case in point. Although this passage is in Chapter I, it is really a part of the introductory material.

⁷ The italics in this paragraph are my own.

"The Institution for the Encouragement of the Fine Arts opens today, with a handsome entertainment in the Exhibition-room, as at Somerset House. It strikes me that the direction given by amateurs and professors to their protégés and pupils, who aspire to be artists, is upon a pedantic and false principle. All the Fine Arts have it for their highest and more legitimate end and purpose, to affect the human passions, or smooth and alleviate for a time the more unquiet feelings of the mind - to excite wonder, or terror, or pleasure, or emotion of some kind or other.¹ It often happens that, in the very rise and origin of these arts, as in the instance of Homer, the principal object is obtained in a degree not equalled by his successors. But there is a degree of execution which, in more refined times, the poet or musician begins to study, which gives a value of its own to their productions of a different kind from the rude strength of their predecessors. Poetry becomes complicated in its rules - music learned in its cadences and harmonies - rhetoric subtle in its periods. There is more given to the labor of executing - less attained by the effect produced. Still the nobler and popular end of these arts is not forgotten; and if we have some productions too learned, too recherchés for public feeling, we have, every now and then, music that electrifies a whole assembly, eloquence which shakes the forum, and poetry which carries men up to the third heaven. But in painting it is different. It is all become a mystery, the secret of which is lodged in a few connoisseurs, whose object is not to praise the works of such painters as produce effects on mankind at large, but to class them according to their

¹ The italics are my own.

proficiency in the inferior rules of the art, which, though most necessary to be taught and learned, should yet only be considered as the *Gradus ad Parnassum*¹ - the steps by which the higher and ultimate object of a great popular effect is to be attained.¹ They have all embraced the very style of criticism which induced Michael Angelo to call some Pope a poor creature, when, turning his attention from the general effect of a noble statue, his Holiness began to criticize the hem of the robe. This seems to me the cause of the decay of this delightful art, especially in history, its noblest branch.¹ As I speak to myself, I may say that a painting should, to be excellent, have something to say to the mind of a man, like myself, well-educated, and susceptible of those feelings which anything strongly recalling natural emotion is likely to inspire. But how seldom do I see anything that moves me much! Wilkie, the far more than Teniers of Scotland, certainly gave many new ideas. So does Will Allan, though overwhelmed with their rebukes about colouring and grouping, against which they are not willing to place his general and original merits. Landseer's dogs were the most magnificent things I ever saw - leaping, and bounding, and grinning on the canvas. Leslie has great powers; and the scenes from Molière by [Newton] are excellent. Yet painting wants a regenerator - some one who will sweep the cobwebs out of his head before he takes the palette, as Chantrey has done in the sister art.² At present we are painting pictures from the ancients, as authors in the days of

¹ The italics, except *Gradus ad Parnassum*, are my own.

² Scott gives also a good discussion of sculpture, and indirectly a few side lights on his own position, in a letter about a young man (Greenshields) ambitious as a sculptor. (Life, Vol.IX, p.249 ff.).

Louis Quatorze wrote epic poems according to the recipe of Madame Dacier and Co. The poor reader or spectator has no remedy; the compositions are secundem artem, and if he does not like them, he is no judge - that's all."¹

¹ Journal, pp. 118, 119, 120. (February, 1826).

II. SCOTT'S PERCEPTION OF FORM.

It has been said, and with some show of justice, that Scott sets forth his pictures¹ as telling sketches oftener than as detailed representations of all the facts. This admitted, a certain difficulty in discussing his descriptions as to their presentation of form (or dissecting them preparatory to such discussion) appears. The most elusive quality of the sketch, as well as its most effective quality, is its suggestion,— what it leaves unsaid. We can only point to this stroke and to that, and say: These are the tangible media of this effect, and all we are like to find for it. Color, and light and shade, are Scott's favorite tools. This is but to be expected, since he loves the bold, and the striking, the strong, yet elusive traits of nature. Of all the aspects of graphic art, form lends itself least to elusive effects. It is there, or not there; to suggest it is difficult. However, if the writer is successful in suggesting form, he has a double advantage. In the first place, his freedom from limiting, defining terms, leaves the imagination of his readers free,— an advantage of which, as we have seen, Scott thought most highly. Secondly, suggested form lends itself readily to the conveying of images terrible, uncouth, majestic,— in a word, romantic. Since Scott's imagination and taste leaned very decidedly toward images of this sort, his frequent adoption of the suggested rather than the definitely pictured form seems so natural as to be almost inevitable.

¹ This term is here broadly used.

Of the suggestion of form, Scott has a singular mastery.¹

"The wandering eye could o'er it go,
 And mark the distant city glow
 With gloomy splendour red;
 For on the smoke-wreaths, huge and slow,
 That round her sable turrets flow,
 The morning beams were shed,
 And tinged them with a lustre proud,
 Like that which streaks a thunder-cloud.
 Such dusky grandeur clothed the height,
 Where the huge castle holds its state,
 And all the steep slope down,
 Whose ridgy back heaves to the sky,
 Piled deep and massy, close and high,
 Mine own romantic town!"²

When one reads this beautiful bit of description, he feels that the picture is of a distant scene. This impression is produced chiefly by the first two lines quoted: "wandering eye" - one's eye does not wander over a scene immediately at hand - and "distant city glow." The impression of a scene viewed in perspective³ is very subtly produced. It is possible that the mind also realizes instinctively that only at a distance will smoke or clouds reflect light and color.

¹ Commented upon by Ruskin, Modern Painters, Vol. III, (Chap. XVI) p. 291 ff. Ruskin goes so far as to cite descriptions of Scott's which are without definitely depicted form. Ruskin's commentary will be more fully reported in the chapter on Color.

² Marmion, Standard Edition, Boston, 1900, Canto IV, XXX.

³ Perspective will here be considered as one aspect of form.

Also, the conception most easily compatible with "height where the huge castle holds its state" is one of distance. Besides the terms already suggested, there are several which add the element of form to the picture, but none which express form with definiteness. Huge, and height, and steep contribute to the effect of romantic majesty, as do also ridgy, close, and massy, without limiting the imagination to any settled concept; while high strikes a slight variation on the note introduced by height.¹ The entire effect is that of vastness in which detail, though present (piled) and infinitely varied, is swallowed up in the great sweep of contour against the sky, the whole being made more splendid by the enveloping mystery of smoke. It is possible that Scott considered quite soberly the task of making this passage suggestive rather than definite, for in the MS., "Mine own romantic town" appeared "Dun Edin's towers and town,"² a much more definite, though less poetical, expression than the one preserved in the poem.

Many of Scott's landscape descriptions illustrate, as does the one just given, one of the main aspects of form - perspective. Perspective is not alone a matter of contour, though it always involves contour. When an object is seen at a distance, it appears smaller than it actually is; its lines converge toward the "vanishing point"; and its tones appear simpler than before, thereby "flattening" the object, in appearance. Detail disappears as

¹ Ruskin, Modern Painters, Vol. III, p. 291, in speaking chiefly of the beautiful color in this passage and in the next ten lines, asserts that ridgy, massy, close, and high are the "only hints of form." From his own showing, however, it must be admitted that height suggests form as vividly as do massy and ridgy.

² Recorded, Marmion, Canto IV, XXX, n.

distance from the observer increases, and tones grow dull and more dull until, unless it has local color distinctly different from that of its background, the object disappears altogether. Any variation of the light from normal daylight accelerates the simplification of values and disappearance, though it does not, refraction aside, affect the convergence of line. The following passage affords an excellent example of what is called by critics aerial perspective, - that is, perspective dependent not on the commonly suggested convergence of line, but on the disappearance of detail, the simplification and lowering of values, and the increasing appearance of flatness, which distance produces. The armour of the warriors glances fainter and fainter, until the boats are so far away that they are seen as dark on the darkening main, against a lighter sky.

"Beneath their oars the ocean's might
 Was dashed to sparks of glimmering light.
 Faint and more faint, as off they bore,
 Their armour glanced against the shore,
 And, mingled with the dashing tide,
 Their murmuring voices distant died. -
 'God speed them!' said the Priest, as dark
 On distant billows glides each bark."¹

Much of the effect of the lines that follow, depends upon the vivid suggestion of the sinking of the landscape as the boats drew away from the strand, and the seeming rise of the approaching beacon, whose light grows from a twinkle like "that solitary spark" shown

¹The Lord Of The Isles, Canto V, XII.

to the page from Queen Mary's window, to a fierce, "portentous" flame.¹

"In night the fairy prospects sink,
 Where Cumray's isles with verdant link
 Close the fair entrance of the Clyde;
 The woods of Bute, no more descried,
 Are gone² - *****
 The half-faced moon shone dim and pale,
 And glanced against the whitened sail;
 But on that ruddy beacon-light
 Each steersman kept the helm aright.

 As less and less the distance grows,
 High and more high the beacon rose;
 The light, that seem'd a twinkling star,
 Now blazed portentous, fierce and far."³

In the description of Crichtoun Castle, the touches which set the scene most vividly before us are suggestive. In the first section quoted, many of the terms suggest depth, or height, or the contrast between them; towers, various architecture, and mighty mass, suggest multitudinous detail; in the apostrophe to Crichtoun all the descriptive terms (the observer being now within the walls) suggest form, with the single exceptions of "diamond form," and, in

¹ Critics mention Scott's partiality to night scenes. This aspect of his artistic taste is interestingly treated by Henderson, T.F., in the Cambridge History of English Literature, Vol. XII, p. 19.

² MS., "have sunk:"

³ The Lord Of The Isles, Canto V, XIII.

the momentary return to the first point of view, made in "undulating."

"At length up that wild dale they wind,
 Where Crichtoun's Castle crowns the bank; *****
 That Castle rises on the steep
 Of the green vale of Tyne:
 And far beneath, where slow they creep,
 From pool to eddy, dark and deep,
 Where alders moist, and willows weep
 You hear her streams repine.
 The towers in different ages rose;
 Their various architecture shows
 The builders' various hands;
 A mighty mass, that could oppose,
 When deadliest hatred fired its foes,
 The vengeful Douglas bands. *****
 "Crichtoun! though now thy miry court
 But pens the lazy steer and sheep,
 Thy turrets rude, and tottered keep,
 Have been the minstrel's loved resort. *****
 Nor wholly yet had time defaced
 Thy lordly gallery fair;
 Nor yet the stony cord unbraced,
 Whose twisted notes, with roses laced,
 Adorn thy ruin'd stair.
 Still rises unimpair'd below,

The courtyard's graceful portico;
 Above its cornice, row on row
 Of fair-hewn facets richly show
 Their pointed diamond form, *****
 Or, from thy grass-grown battlement
 May trace in undulating line
 The sluggish mazes of the Tyne."¹

Scott's prose also gives evidence of his ability to suggest form. The imagination of the reader is stimulated by descriptions such as that which begins the narrative of Guy Mannering. The young traveller mounts his horse, to seek the village where he expects to spend the night. The month is November. "The brief and gloomy twilight of the season had already commenced. His way lay through a wide tract of black moss extending for miles on each side and before him. Little eminences rose like islands on its surface, bearing here and there patches of corn, which even at this season was green, and sometimes a hut, or farmhouse, shaded by a willow or two, and surrounded by large elder-bushes. These insulated dwellings communicated with each other by winding passages through the moss, impassable by any but the natives themselves. ***** As the light grew faint and more faint, and the morass appeared blacker and blacker, our traveller questioned more closely each chance passenger on his distance from the village of Kippletringan, where he proposed to quarter for the night. ***** It was now very cloudy, although the stars from time to time shed a twinkling and uncertain light. Hitherto nothing had broken the silence around him but the deep cry of

¹ Marmion, Canto IV; X, XI.

the bog-blitter, or bull-of-the-bog (a large species of bittern), and the sighs of the wind as it passed along the dreary morass. To these was now joined the distant roar of the ocean, towards which the traveller seemed to be fast approaching."¹

While it is true that in the picture just given, sound-words, of melancholy connotation, add to the effect of desolateness, the lack of definitely depicted form ministers to the same effect.

Romantic desolation is the key-note, also, of the celebrated description of the Waste of Cumberland. "In truth, Nature, as if she had designed this tract of country to be the barrier between two hostile nations, has stamped upon it the character of wildness and desolation. The hills are neither high nor rocky, but the land is all heath and morass, the huts poor and mean, and at a great distance from each other. ***** The way proved longer than he had anticipated, and the horizon began to grow gloomy, just as he entered upon an extensive morass. Choosing his steps with care and deliberation, the young officer proceeded along a path that sometimes sunk between two broken black banks of moss earth, sometimes crossed narrow but deep ravines filled with a consistence between mud and water, and sometimes along heaps of gravel and stones which had been swept together when some torrent or water-spout from the neighboring hills overflowed the marshy ground below."²

Few passages in the Waverly Novels suggest the almost poignant mystery with which early night shrouds familiar scenes, as does the following from Rob Roy: "Evening had now closed, and the

¹ Guy Mannering, Vol. I, pp. 4, 5.

² Ibid. Vol. I, pp. 205, 206.

growing darkness gave to the broad, still, and deep expanse of the brimful river, first a hue sombre and uniform, then a dismal and turbid appearance, partially lighted by a waning and pallid moon. The massive and ancient bridge which stretches across the Clyde was now but dimly visible, and resembled that which Mirza, in his unequalled vision, has described as traversing the valley of Bagdad. The low-browed arches, seen as imperfectly as the dusky current which they bestrode, seemed rather caverns which swallowed up the gloomy waters of the river, than apertures contrived for their passage."¹

Sometimes the freshening breeze sweeps aside the sombre clouds, and instead of a nocturne such as we have just read, in which the blurred and softened form vibrates with pulsing color, we look out on such a picture as this: "The twilight had now melted nearly into darkness; ***** I only heard the distant trample of the horses' feet, and the wailing and prolonged sound of their trumpets, which rung through the woods to recall stragglers. ***** I had no horse, and the deep and wheeling stream of the river, rendered turbid by the late tumult of which its channel had been the scene, and seeming yet more so under the doubtful influence of an imperfect moonlight, had no inviting influence. ***** A sharp frost wind, which made itself heard and felt from time to time, removed the clouds of mist which might otherwise have slumbered till morning on the valley, and though it could not totally disperse the clouds of

¹Rob Roy, Vol. II, p. 44.

vapour, yet threw them in confused and changeful masses, now hovering around the heads of the mountains, now filling, as with a dense and voluminous stream of smoke, the various deep gullies where masses of the composite rock, or breccia, tumbling in fragments from the cliffs, have rushed to the valley, leaving each behind its course a rent and torn ravine resembling a deserted watercourse. The moon, which was now high, and twinkled with all the vivacity of a frosty atmosphere, silvered the windings of the river and the peaks and precipices which the mist left visible, while her beams seemed, as it were, absorbed by the fleecy whiteness of the mist, where it lay thick and condensed, and gave to the more light and vapoury specks, which were elsewhere visible, a sort of filmy transparency resembling the lightest veil of silver gauze."¹

However, although Scott was very fond of depicting night scenes, his work illustrates also remarkable skill in the suggestion of form as seen by a clearer and more faithful light than that of the "waning and pallid moon."² In distinction from descriptions of landscapes in which form is nearly or altogether suggested, are the ones in which Scott has spurred the fancy of his readers, and in -

¹ Rob Roy, Vol. II, pp. 237, 238, 239. In many passages like this one, Scott shows keen realization of, and a happy facility in expressing, subtle differences in texture.

² The reader, if interested in pursuing Scott's descriptions of night scenes, will be rewarded by an examination of the following examples, as well as others that his experience will suggest:
Ellangowan Castle, Guy Mannering, - - - - - Vol. I, pp. 7, 26-7;
The Solway, Ibid., - - - - - Vol. II, pp. 128, 9;
Wolf's Crag, The Bride of Lammermoor, - - - Vol. I, p. 98;
Muschat's Cairn, The Heart of Midlothian, - Vol. I, p. 219, ff;
King Richard's visit to Friar Tuck's cell,
Ivanhoe, - Vol. I, pp. 210, ff.

creased the verisimilitude of his pictures, by mingling with suggestion, touches of realism.

In the realistic, or partially realistic class, come many of the daylight descriptions. The following is notable for the way in which the imagination of the reader is stimulated and roused by touches of realistic detail: "The country ***** is, generally speaking, open, unenclosed, and bare. But here and there the progress of rills, or small rivers, has formed dells, glens, or, as they are provincially termed, dens, on whose high and rocky banks trees and shrubs of all kinds find a shelter, and grow with a luxuriant profusion, which is the more gratifying, as it forms an unexpected contrast with the general face of the country. This was eminently the case with the approach to the ruins of St. Ruth, which was for a time, merely a sheep track along the side of a steep and bare hill. By degrees, however, as this bank descended, and winded round the hillside, trees began to appear, at first singly, stunted and blighted, with locks of wool upon their trunks, and their roots hollowed out into recesses, in which the sheep loved to repose themselves, - a sight much more gratifying to the eye of an admirer of the picturesque, than to that of a planter or forester. By and by the trees formed groups, fringed on the edges, and filled up in the middle, by thorns and hazel bushes; and at length these groups closed so much together that, although a broad glade opened here and there under their boughs, or a small patch of bog or heath occurred which had refused nourishment to the seed which they sprinkled round, and consequently remained open and waste, the scene might on the whole be termed decidedly woodland. The sides of the valley

began to approach each other more closely; the rush of a brook was heard below, and between the intervals afforded by the openings in the natural wood, its waters were seen hurling clear and rapid under their sylvan canopy."¹

The description, as it goes on, becomes more and more definite in its delineations of form; or, rather, the relative proportions of definitely depicted and suggested form become more nearly equal.² As Scott was avowedly inclined toward a romantic point of view, it is not surprising that, while many of his descriptions, both of landscape and figures, contain only suggestions of form, few or none portray form definitely with no touch or trace of suggestion. It will be found that the great novellist set his palette, as does every experienced artist, according to the key and purpose of the particular picture he meditated. Hence, when the purpose was the portrayal of desolate mystery and gloom, hues and delicate transitional tones predominated; while, when the purpose was the production of clearness and vivid realism, no painter had to his hand more actual and contrasting colors. "They stood pretty high upon the side of the glen, which had suddenly opened into a sort of ampitheatre to give room for a pure and profound lake of a few acres extent, and a space of level ground around it. The banks then arose everywhere steeply, and in some places were varied by

¹ The Antiquary, Vol. I, pp. 210, 211.

² It is of course difficult to say just when a description involving form becomes definite and ceases to be suggestive; a working terminology might be based on the characteristic suggested above, - that the description be placed in one class or the other according to the preponderance either of definiteness or suggestion.

rocks, in others covered with the copse, which run up, feathering their sides lightly and irregularly, and breaking the uniformity of the green pasture-ground. Beneath, the lake discharged itself into the huddling and tumultuous brook which had been their companion since they had entered the glen. At the point at which it issued from its 'parent lake' stood the ruins which they had come to visit."¹

Having struck, in the passage just given, the note that determines the wildly sylvan character of the scene, Scott seems to allow his enthusiasm as an antiquary to get a bit the better of him, and gives details in the description of St. Ruth, which take from the impression of mystery what they add to the vividness and realism of the scene. He does not forget, however, the purpose of the description: to express repose in surroundings suggesting unrest and wildness, - a favorite method of his to stimulate, by contrast, the imaginations of his readers. "They [the ruins] were not of great extent; but the singular beauty, as well as wild and sequestered character, of the spot on which they were situated gave them an interest and importance superior to that which attaches itself to architectural remains of greater consequence, but placed near to ordinary houses, and possessing less romantic accompaniments. The eastern window of the church remained entire, with all its ornaments and tracery-work, and the sides upheld by flying buttresses, whose airy support, detached from the wall against which they were placed, and ornamented with pinnacles and carved work, gave a variety and lightness to the building. The roof and western end of the church were

¹ The Antiquary, Vol. I, p. 212.

completely ruinous, but the latter appeared to have made one side of a square, of which the ruins of the conventual buildings formed other two, and the gardens a fourth. The side of these buildings which overhung the brook was partly founded on a steep and precipitous rock; for the place had been occasionally turned to military purposes. ***** The ground formerly occupied by the garden was still marked by a few orchard trees. At a greater distance from the buildings were detached oaks and elms and chestnuts growing singly, which had attained great size. The rest of the space between the ruins and the hill was a close-cropped sward, which the daily pasture of the sheep kept in much finer order than if it had been subjected to the scythe and broom. The whole scene had a repose which was still and affecting without being monotonous."¹

Throughout the enthusiastic description of this sequestered² scene, as in the passage which follows, contrast, between rocks and copse or sward, between tumultuous brook and calm, deep lake, - between repose and wildness, marks the treatment and spurs the imagination. "The dark deep basin in which the clear blue lake reposed, reflecting the water lilies which grew on its surface, and the trees which here and there threw their arms from the banks, was finely contrasted³ with the haste and tumult of the brook, which broke away from the outlet as if escaping from confinement and hurried down the glen, wheeling around the base of the rock on which the ruins

¹ The Antiquary, Vol. I, pp. 212, 213.

² And on that account more romantic, as Scott observes a few lines farther on in the chapter.

³ The italics are my own.

were situated, and brawling in foam and fury with every shelve and stone which obstructed its passage. A similar contrast¹ was seen between the level green meadow in which the ruins were situated, and the large timber trees which were scattered over it, compared with the precipitous banks which arose at a short distance around, partly fringed with light and feathery underwood, partly rising in steeps clothed with purple heath, and partly more abruptly elevated into fronts of gray rock chequered with lichen, and with those hardy plants which find root even in the most arid crevices of the crags."²

The description of the park and mansion of Tully-Veolan is still more definitely marked by passages and terms of accurately descriptive (in distinction to suggestive) meaning. It will be noted that the description loses much of the romantic charm which characterizes such passages as that picturing the bridge in moonlight (pages 27 and 28 above), while its definiteness gives a tone of actuality to the record of which it is a part.³ "About a bow-shot from the end of the village appeared the enclosures, proudly denominated the Parks, of Tully-Veolan, being certain square fields, surrounded and divided by stone walls five feet in height. In the center of the exterior barrier was the upper gate of the avenue, opening under an archway, battlemented on the top, and adorned with two large weather-beaten masses of upright stone, which, if the

¹ The italics are my own.

² The Antiquary, Vol. I, pp. 213, 214. Ruskin, Modern Painters, Vol. III, p. 292, comments on Scott's love for rocks, and his understanding of their structure.

³ This description is prefaced by a very interesting picture of the village of Tully-Veolan, not quoted here on account of space, and because of the fact that similarly illustrative selections are given above.

tradition of the hamlet could be trusted, had once represented - at least had been once designed to represent - two rampart Bears, the supporters of the family of Bradwardine. This avenue was straight and of moderate length, running between a double row of very ancient horse-chestnuts planted alternately with sycamores, which rose to such huge height and flourished so luxuriantly, that their boughs completely over arched the broad road beneath. Beyond these venerable ranks, and running parallel to them, were two high walls, of apparently the like antiquity, overgrown with ivy, honeysuckle, and other climbing plants.¹ The avenue seemed very little trodden, and chiefly by foot-passengers; so that being very broad, and enjoying a constant shade, it was clothed with grass of a deep and rich verdure, excepting where a foot-path, worn by occasional passengers, tracked with a natural sweep the way from the upper to the lower gate. This nether portal, like the former, opened in front of a wall ornamented with some rude sculpture, with battlements on the top, over which were seen, half-hidden by the trees of the avenue, the high, steep roofs and narrow gables of the mansion, with lines indented into steps, and corners decorated with small turrets. One of the folding leaves of the lower gate was open, and as the sun shone full into the court beyond, a long line of brilliancy was flung upon the aperture up the dark and gloomy avenue. It was one of those effects which a painter loves to represent, and mingled well with the struggling

¹ This passage exhibits well the "graphical minuteness" of which Henderson, Cambridge History of English Literature, Vol. XII, p. 19, speaks. There are others equally faithful, but I know of none in the Waverly Novels more minute. Even this one, as the reader will observe, contains suggested form. Cf. also, in Chapter I, pp.7,8 (above), Scott's own statement of his descriptive method (quoted by Morritt).

light which found its way between the boughs of the shady arch that vaulted the broad green alley.

"The solitude and repose of the whole scene seemed almost monastic; and Waverly, who had given his horse to his servant on entering the first gate, walked slowly down the avenue, enjoying the grateful and cooling shade, and so much pleased with the placid ideas of rest and seclusion excited by the confined and quiet scene that he forgot the misery and dirt of the hamlet he had left behind him."¹ Of the details which follow, in the description of the mansion itself, Scott, illustrating well his method of giving realism to his descriptions, says: "There is no particular mansion described under the name of Tully-Veolan; but the peculiarities of the description occur in various old Scottish seats. The house of Warrender, upon Burntsfield Links, and that of Old Ravelston, ***** have both contributed several hints to the description in the text. The house of Dean, near Edinboro, has also some points of resemblance with Tully-Veolan. The author has, however, been informed that the house of Grandtully resembles that of the Baron of Bradwardine still more than any of the above."²

The description of the mansion itself shows how successfully the author's realistic method may be employed. The position of the gateway is given, with the number of buildings, their angle, their design and that of their details; the size of the windows, the peculiar shape of the bartizans, each accurately portrayed; a large number

¹ Waverly, Vol. I, pp. 62, 63, 64.

² Ibid., p. 66, n. Lang says (Ibid., p. 296, n.): "Probably the old House of Traquair is as like Tully-Veolan as any surviving edifice, bears and all. The avenue of Tully-Veolan resembles that of Kenmure Castle, in Galloway."

of minutely described details are massed together with a few comments on their effect upon the beholder, to form an impression of reality seldom equalled in any artistic description, and almost never in Scott. Indeed, this passage comes as near to being an inventory as Scott's work ever comes. If it were not for the enlivening touches of droll humour and personal feeling (which characterise all his descriptions, whether short or long), the detailed account would be hopelessly tiresome.

"There were loop-holes for musketry," continues the author, "and iron stanchions on the lower windows, - probably to repel any roving bands of Gypsies, or resist a predatory visit from the Caterans of the neighboring Highlands. Stables and other offices occupied another side of the square. The former were low vaults, with narrow slits instead of windows, resembling, as Edward's groom observed, 'rather a prison for murderers and larceners and such like as are tried at 'sizes than a place for any Christian cattle.'" After carefully describing the dungeon-like girnels, the battlemented walls, the tun-bellied pigeon-house, Scott proceeds: "Another corner of the court displayed a fountain, where a huge bear, carved in stone, predominated over a large stone-basin, into which he disgorged the water. ***** All sorts of bears, small and large, demi or in full proportion, were carved over the windows, upon the ends of the gables, terminated the spouts, and supported the turrets, with the ancient family motto, 'Bewar the Bar,' cut under each hyperborean form."¹

¹ Waverly, Vol. I, pp. 64, 65, 66; "And here," says Scott, after a few more realistic touches, "we beg permission to close a chapter of still life. (Ibid., p. 66).

It would not be difficult to multiply examples both of Scott's ability to suggest form in his portrayal of the majestic, the weird, the romantic; or of his remarkable facility in the use of actual detail when he wished to produce the impression of reality. There is, however, small need to labor this point, since the experience of every reader of Scott will suggest many instances, besides the ones mentioned here, which exhibit both aspects of his descriptive power. The description of Ellangowan Castle by daylight,¹ the picture of Shaws Castle,² those of Cumnor Hall,³ of Ben Cruachan,⁴ of Avenel⁵ and Lochleven,⁶ of the Lodge at Woodstock,⁷ of the forest of Rotherwood,⁸ of the lists at Ashby,⁹ of the beautiful prospect from the bower of Rose Bradwardine,¹⁰ are but a few of the many passages in which Scott mingles with suggestions of form detail so real, so appropriate, that the picture glows before us in the hue and form of life.

The skill of which we have up to this point spoken is, however, not confined to landscape alone. In no department of his work is he more preëminently the master than in his descriptions of persons. In the production of practically all his portraits, whether

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- ¹ Guy Mannering, Vol. I, p. 32 ff.
 - ² St. Ronan's Well, Vol. II, p. 13 ff.
 - ³ Kenilworth, Vol. I, pp. 40, 41.
 - ⁴ The Highland Widow, Chronicles of the Canongate, Vol. II, pp. 108, 9
 - ⁵ The Monastery, Vol. II, pp. 74, 75, 76.
 - ⁶ The Abbot, Vol. I, p. 306.
 - ⁷ Woodstock, Vol. I, pp. 48 to 53. This description (of the inner as well as the outer aspect of the Lodge) is most carefully detailed.
 - ⁸ Ivanhoe, Vol. I, pp. 5 to 9. This description is remarkable for its combination of treatment of scenery and figures.
 - ⁹ Ibid., Vol. I, pp. 88, 89, 90, 91, 92; 107, 108.
 - ¹⁰ Waverly, Vol. I, pp. 111, 112. (One of the most beautiful and characteristic in all the Waverly Novels).

finished or sketched, suggestion is the chief tool. Never (and that is a strong word) are we given more than is necessary to furnish our imagination with the salient points. A few telling touches, as: "He had the exterior appearance of a mendicant.]Scott often gives such a single preparatory sweep of the brush, into which the details of the picture are painted[. A slouched hat of huge dimensions; a long white beard, which mingled with his grizzled hair; an aged, but strongly marked and expressive countenance, hardened by climate and exposure to a right brick-dust complexion; a long blue gown, with a pewter badge on the right arm; two or three wallets, or bags slung across his shoulder, for holding the different kinds of meal when he received his charity in kind from those who were but a degree richer than himself - all these marked at once a beggar by profession and one of that priveleged class which are called in Scotland the King's Bedes-men, or, vulgarly, Blue-Gowns."¹ Not until one makes an attempt, from this description, to draw Edie Ochiltree, does he find out how much is here accomplished in a few strokes, and how much more is suggested, but left unsaid. Still more vivid is the sketch of Meg Merrilies: "Her appearance made Mannering start. She was full six feet high, wore a man's great-coat over the rest of her dress, had in her hand a goodly sloethorn cudgel, and in all points of equipment, except her petticoats, seemed rather masculine than feminine. Her dark elf-locks shot out like the snakes of the Gorgon between an old-fashioned bonnet called a bon-grace, heightening the singular effect of her strong and weather-beaten features, which they partly shadowed, while her eye had a wild roll that indi-

¹ The Antiquary, Vol. I, p. 43.

cated something like real or affected insanity."¹

Even more detailed than the description of Meg Merrilies, is that of Martha Trapbois: "She was dressed in what was called a Queen-Mary's ruff and farthingale; not the falling ruff with which the unfortunate Mary of Scotland is usually painted, but that which, with more than Spanish stiffness, surrounded the throat, and set off the morose head, of her fierce namesake, of Smithfield memory. This antiquated dress assorted well with the faded complexion, gray eyes, thin lips, and austere visage of the antiquated maiden, which was, moreover, enhanced by a black hood, worn as her head-gear, carefully disposed so as to prevent any of her hair from escaping to view, probably because the simplicity of the period knew no art of disguising the color with which time had begun to grizzle her tresses. Her figure was tall, thin, and flat, with skinny arms and hands, and feet of the larger size, cased in huge high-heeled shoes, which added height to a stature already ungainly. Apparently some art had been used by the tailor, to conceal a slight defect of shape, occasioned by the accidental elevation of one shoulder above the other; but the praiseworthy efforts of the ingenious mechanic had only succeeded in calling the attention of the observer to his benevolent purpose, without demonstrating that he had been able to achieve it."²

It is, indeed, in the description of characters like Edie Ochiltree and the Gypsy Wife, Meg Merrilies, and Martha Trapbois, that Scott most notably succeeds. His descriptions of young women

¹ Guy Mannering, Vol. I, p. 20.

² The Fortunes Of Nigel, Vol. II, pp. 72, 73.

are sometimes disappointing, often brief or general, or seemingly feelingless.¹ "With the Scot of the humble, or burgher class, and with Scottish eccentrics, gentle or simple,"² he most inimitably succeeds. The half-crazed, and wholly irresponsible Peter Peebles;³ the dwarf, Canny Elshie;⁴ Douce Davie Deans;⁵ the bashful yet pertinacious Dumbiedikes;⁵ Bartoline Saddletree, the legal authority, and his gossip-loving helpmate;⁵ the theologically alert Mause, and her practical son, Cuddie;⁶ are immortal.

Almost all Scott's descriptions of people, where he has tried to make the descriptions interesting or striking⁷ can be classified by the dominating characteristic,- the leading or governing trait. In a word, the key passage⁸ of the painting marks its place. For example,

¹ Jeanie Deans, (The Heart of Midlothian, Vol. I, pp. 120, 121), is described in about seven lines, of which nearly five relate to her disposition instead of to her appearance; Lucy Bertram, (Guy Manner-
ing, Vol. I, p. 124), is presented in a line and a half; Isabella Wardour, (The Antiquary, Vol. I, pp. 65 and 92), on being introduced has to content herself with the single appellative "fair," until, over thirty pages farther on, the word "delicate" is added to the portrait. Examples such as these are numerous. This statement should not, however, be taken to mean that Scott failed in the depiction of character. In that he is an acknowledged master. Henderson, Cam-
bridge History of English Literature, Vol. XII, p. 25, accounts for Scott's neglect of his heroines, by the suggestion that when Scott wrote his prose romances "love, with him, had mellowed into the tranquil affection of married life." "The main fault with the hero-
ines," observes Mr. Henderson, "is that they are faultless."

² Henderson, Cambridge History of English Literature, Vol. XII, p. 27.

³ Redgauntlet.

⁴ The Black Dwarf.

⁵ The Heart of Midlothian.

⁶ Old Mortality.

⁷ Which amounts practically to saying, where he thought the subjects worth such effort.

⁸ It is probably unnecessary to remind the reader that this term is in art criticism used to signify a particular part or detail in a picture. See Oxford Dictionary, 1905, Vol. VII, pt. I, p. 528, col. 3, e

of the three descriptions of persons quoted above, the key passage of the description of Edie Ochiltree is that which depicts his haleness; of Meg Merrilies, her masculine aspect and attributes; of the feminine Trapbois, her grim and suspicious austerity. It is when the leading trait is most clearly indicated that Scott's descriptions are most vivid. The amount and treatment of detail varies, but the spirit is present, as in this description of the Master of Ravenswood: "There was nothing in his appearance which should have rendered him unwilling to offer his *** assistance; yet she could not help thinking *** that he seemed cold and reluctant to offer it. A shooting dress of dark cloth intimated the rank of the wearer, though concealed in part by a large and loose cloak of a dark brown colour. A Montero cap and a black feather drooped over the wearer's brow, and partly concealed his features, which, so far as seen, were dark, regular, and full of majestic, though somewhat sullen, expression. Some secret sorrow, or the brooding spirit of some moody passion, had quenched the light and ingenuous vivacity of youth in a countenance singularly fitted to display both, and it was not easy to gaze on the stranger without a secret impression either of pity or awe, or at least of doubt and curiosity allied to both."¹

From the portrait of the Master of Ravenswood, in which the dominant tone is one of mystery and brooding sorrow, to the following of Dominie Sampson, which, though somewhat more brief,² so far as actual description is concerned, presents as vividly the ungainly and

¹ The Bride of Lammermoor, Vol. I, pp. 67, 68. The italics are mine.

² The greater part of the impression of the Dominie's character is produced by interpolated anecdotes, which, as narrative, do not belong strictly in the class of descriptions under discussion.

grotesque, seems a short step, when one remembers how frequently descriptions of like or greater disparity of tone appear in the Novels themselves. "Meantime, his tall, ungainly figure, his taciturn and grave manners, and some grotesque habits of swinging his limbs and screwing his visage while reciting his task, made poor Sampson the ridicule of all his school companions. ***** Half the youthful mob*** used to assemble regularly to see Dominie Sampson ***** descend the stairs from the Greek class, with his lexicon under his arm, his long, misshapen legs sprawling abroad, and keeping awkward time to the play of his immense shoulder-blades as they raised and depressed the loose and threadbare black coat which was his constant and only wear. ***** The long, sallow visage, the goggle eyes, the huge under-jaw, which appeared not to open and shut by an act of volition, but to be dropped and hoisted up again by some complicated machinery within the inner man; the harsh and dissonant voice, and the screech-owl notes to which it was exalted when he was exhorted to pronounce more distinctly,- all added fresh subject for mirth to the torn cloak and shattered shoe, which have afforded legitimate subjects of raillery against the poor scholar, from Juvenal's time downward."¹

Many other descriptions of persons illustrating different aspects of Scott's method and power could be cited. The portrait of Fergus Mac Ivor,² in its general treatment forming a picture of the highland chieftain rather than of one chief in particular; that of Roger Wildrake,³ of Squattlesea Mere, Lincoln, suggested almost en-

¹ Guy Mannering, Vol. I, pp. 14, 15.

² Waverly, Vol. I, p. 170.

³ Woodstock, Vol. I, p. 84 (introduced).

tirely by his speech and actions;¹ that of Foster,² the guardian of Cumnor Hall, produced by a mingling of realistic detail and action; those of Henry Gow,³ the pugnacious, yet honorable smith of Perth, and of Alice Bridgenorth⁴ carefully detailed; and those of Fenella⁵ and Caleb Balderstone⁶ and Mause Headrigg⁷ dominated by the leading spirit of the subjects, will suggest some of the directions in which Scott's creative power was exercised.

However, be it in the descriptions of landscape or of persons, the mingling of detail with suggestion will be found to form the basis of the treatment. As an artist, Scott was first an observer. "Close observation of nature, whether animated or inanimate, was his great characteristic; the brilliancy of fancy, the force of imagination, were directed to clothing ***** her various creations. It is hard to say whether his genius was most conspicuous in describing the beauties of nature or delineating the passions of the heart; he was at once pictorial and dramatic."⁸

¹ There are a few lines concerning his education and disposition on p. 120, Woodstock, Vol. I; however, this is some 36 pages after the introduction of the character.

² Kenilworth, Vol. I, pp. 41, 42.

³ The Fair Maid of Perth, Vol. I, p. 32 ff.

⁴ Peveril of the Peak, Vol. I, pp. 198, 199.

⁵ Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 20, 21.

⁶ The Bride of Lammermoor, Vol. I, p. 100.

⁷ Old Mortality, Vol. I, pp. 82, 83 ff.

⁸ Alison, Sir Archibald, History of Europe, Chapter 5. (Quoted in Moulton, The Library of Literary Criticism, Vol. V, p. 158).

III. SCOTT'S PERCEPTION OF LIGHT AND SHADE.

Light and shade is the means by which objects represented may be given the appearance of reality, by being represented in relief, on the flat surface of canvas or paper. Every object in nature, no matter how insignificant, casts its shadow and reflects its light. Although we are not all accustomed to looking for the lights and shadows on familiar, every-day objects, modern painting has prepared us to accept the statement just made, as true. There is another aspect of light and shade, however, which is not commonly so well understood. To this aspect,- or rather these aspects, for the matter is really two-fold - are given the names tone, and value. Both are intimately connected with light and shade.

Tone is dependent upon proportion,- upon the relation of color to color, or tint to tint. We say that a painting is low in tone when all the tints of the picture are dull and grey, as they are in a landscape in fog; that it is high in tone when bright colors (not necessarily colors high in key) predominate. In the foggy landscape a touch of deep, rich scarlet would, normally, be out of tone, for it would express a relation not found in nature.¹ The tone of a picture is like the key of a piece of music. The notes of each must be in accord. The weatherbeaten boarding of a deserted barn, with its beautiful play of lavender and pale green and pink,² affords an illus-

¹My first clear understanding of these matters was gained years ago from Van Dyke, J.C., How to Judge of a Picture, (New York, 1889).

²Let the reader who doubts this analysis attempt to match the color in a weatherbeaten board, with material or pigment of any one color.

tration of simple tone. It rests the eye, because it is what painters "good in tone" - that is, nothing jars in its color-relation. Cheap wall-paper, on the other hand, will usually give an illustration of lack of tone. The garish, unrelated tints, besides having no richness or pleasing color quality, are disquieting.

Value, on the contrary, depends on brightness. The nearer colors approach to light, the more value they are said to have.¹ Value, instead of being, as is tone, a difference in relation, is a difference in pitch. A white paper against snow, or two pieces of the same white paper in slightly different positions, will exhibit differences in value. In a word, value is a term for the amount of light or dark in a tone.

All this may seem somewhat foreign to the subject of Scott's descriptions. Bespeaking the patience of the reader, I will try, nevertheless, to show that Scott's descriptions conform, in the large, to the essential requirements of light and shade;² and, moreover, that in certain departments of the field they have qualities of positive artistic excellence. It is, however, in tone and gradation that the descriptions of Scott are chiefly remarkable. That he rarely, if ever, uses any statement of the effect of light and shade to produce the effect of reality,- of relief, is due not more to his

¹ This terminology is reversed in the case of black-and-white drawings. The white paper is here the unit of value, dark masses, as they recede from light, being said to gain in value.

² It were probably extravagant to say that Scott's technical knowledge of these matters was at all extensive. What acute observation and instinctive artistry could do for him, was done. Even admitting that his perception was in this respect largely instinctive, we are sometimes amazed at the remarkable certainty and force of his results.

expressed preference for wild and romantic effects, than to his incomplete knowledge of drawing. Moreover, Scott wrote for the people more than he did for critics or amateurs. His audience was interested in the scene rather than in the shape of the areas of shade or in the position and quality of the lights. To produce the effect of romantic desolation so eagerly sought by his readers, the words massy, and huge, and wild, were better tools¹ for Scott's use than words conveying a more exact idea of form or contour. With tone and value, the case is different. The prevailing tone of a scene may, and sometimes does, strike the keynote of the mood of the scene; proper emphasis on the leading features calls for intelligent contrasting of values. With these aspects of light and shade, since his chief interest was in the mood of nature, Scott had immediate concern.

"A rising wind, heard rather than felt, seemed to groan forth.

***** The mountain was seen to send down its rugged sides thick wreaths of heaving mist, which, rolling through the rugged chasms that seamed the grisly hill, resembled torrents of rushing lava pouring down from a volcano. The ridgy precipices, which formed the sides of these huge ravines, showed their splintery and rugged edges over the vapour, as if dividing from each other the descending streams of mist which rolled around them."² The desolation of the picture is produced largely by the monotony of tone. Grey walls separate clouds of grey mist, chasms are alternately obscured and revealed, but all is rendered gloomy and terrible by the mystery of fog. It needs, however, the touch of contrast of which Scott is so fond, to complete

¹ This statement, with some supporting evidence, is made above, (p.22)

² Anne of Geierstein, Vol. I, p. 10.

the impression of mournful terror. "As a strong contrast to this gloomy and threatening scene," continues the author, "the more distant mountain range of Rigi shone brilliant with all the hues of an autumnal sun."¹ It should be observed also that the contrast in this description is one of value rather than of color; for, though hues suggests the idea of color, the contrast of brilliance and gloom is essentially one of light and dark, instead of one of color. The truth of tone in the scene just described is evidenced by the fact that the contrast is introduced not only where it is most effective, but where it is most natural. The desolate, monotonous expanse of mist-wreathed rocks is presented, as it would in nature appear, without strong contrast of values; while the distant range, which could bear a brighter light than the vapour-mantled crags, if any part of the visible scene could bear such light, is shown in vivid autumn sunlight.

The same attention to the production of a natural image is shown in the prevailing tone, and indistinctness of form, of the following picture: "The travellers were at length engaged in a narrow path, running along the verge of a precipice. Beneath was water, but of what description they could not ascertain. The wind, indeed, which began to be felt in sudden gusts, sometimes swept aside the mist so completely as to show the waves glimmering below; but whether they were those of the same lake on which their morning journey had commenced, whether it was another and separate sheet of water of a similar character, or whether it was a river or large brook, the view afforded was too indistinct to determine."²

¹ Anne of Geierstein, Vol. I, p. 10.

² Ibid., p. 14.

The author goes on to exhibit his perception of the principles of aerial perspective (which is one of the aspects of light and shade, being largely a matter of values), by judging, in the continuation of the passage just quoted, distance by distinctness instead of by the size of the objects seen. "Thus far was certain, that they were not on the shores of the Lake of Lucerne *** ; for the same hurricane gusts which showed them water in the bottom of the glen, gave them a transient view of the opposite side, at what exact distance they could not well discern, but near enough to show tall abrupt rocks and shaggy pine-trees, here united in groups, and there singly anchored among the cliffs which overhung the water. This was a more distinct landscape¹ than the farther side of the lake would have offered, had they been on the right road."²

Even the figures with which Scott peoples scenes like those described above, are treated in a way to make them a part of the scene rather than supplementary to it. "Upon the summit of a pyramidical rock, that rose out of the depths of the valley, was seen a female figure, so obscured by mist that only the outline could be traced. The form, reflected³ against the sky, appeared rather the undefined lineaments of a spirit than of a mortal maiden; for her person seemed as light, and scarcely more opaque, than the thin cloud that surrounded her pedestal."⁴

¹ The italics are my own.

² Anne of Geierstein, Vol. I, p. 14.

³ Relieved? As no reasonable interpretation of the word reflected agrees with the circumstances, the reader is forced to impute the misuse of the word to the haste with which Scott wrote.

⁴ Anne of Geierstein, Vol. I, p. 36.

The carefully, (though perhaps instinctively), maintained tone of the following description of Ellangowan Castle and Bay, is largely responsible for the charm of the picture. "It was one hour after midnight, and the prospect around was lovely. The gray old towers of the ruin, partly entire, partly broken, here bearing the rusty weather-stains of ages, and there partly mantled with ivy, stretched along the verge of the dark rock which rose on Mannering's right hand. In his front was the quiet bay, whose little waves, crisping and sparkling to the moonbeams, rolled successively along its surface, and dashed with a soft and murmuring ripple against the silvery beach. To the left, the woods advanced far into the ocean, waving in the moonlight along ground of an undulating and varied form, and presenting those varieties of light and shade, and that interesting combination of glade and thicket, upon which the eye delights to rest, charmed with what it sees, yet curious to pierce still deeper into the intricacies of the woodland scenery."¹ The dark rocks, the sparkling waves and silvery beach, as well as the interesting² variation of light and shade in the foliage, take their place as various notes of the scene, with the sureness of mastery. No touch or expanse is out of tone; the relation is practically perfect.

In effective contrast of light and shade, especially of one strong touch of light on a field of shade, Scott often reminds the

¹ Guy Mannering, Vol. I, p. 26.

² This term is used in its critical sense, as meaning that quality of texture and treatment which at once stimulates and satisfies the eye of the spectator, - which is at the same time restful and provocative of the interest unconsciously given to suggested forms and vistas.

reader of Rembrandt. I am far from making a comparison between Scott and the great painter of light and shadow. Such a comparison were above all things an idle one.¹ Yet such pictures as this, contain some of the suggestion with which Rembrandt clothed his dusky interiors: " She sat upon a broken corner-stone in the angle of a paved apartment, part of which she had swept clean to afford a smooth space for the evolutions of her spindle. A strong sunbeam, through a lofty and narrow window, fell upon her wild dress and features, and afforded her light for her occupation; the rest of the apartment was very gloomy."² Or this: "Had there been painters in those days capable to execute such a subject, the Jew, as he bent his withered form, and expanded his chilled and trembling hands over the fire, would have formed no bad emblematical personification of the Winter season."³ In the light of the rekindled fire, and of the sunbeam from the lofty window, each figure glows against its dusky back-ground as glow the figures of Rembrandt. That Scott realized what he had in common with the "Shakespeare of Holland"⁴ is evidenced by several statements such as this: "His [Isaac's] folded hands, his disheveled hair and beard, his furred coat and high cap, seen by the wiry and broken light,⁵ would have afforded a study for Rembrandt, had that celebrated painter existed at the period."⁶

¹Being based, as it necessarily must be, upon the false assumption that description is "word-painting."

²Guy Mannering, Vol. I, pp. 35, 36.

³Ivanhoe, Vol. I, p. 57.

⁴So called because of the dramatic quality of his pictures.

⁵The light in the dungeon of Torquilstone came from high overhead, as does the light in many of Rembrandt's paintings.

⁶Ivanhoe, Vol. I, pp. 279, 280.

There are in Scott's descriptions few better examples of adherence to prevailing tone, than that given by the description of Norham Castle:

"Day set on Norham's Castle steep,
And Tweed's fair river, broad and deep,
And Cheviot's mountains lone:
The battled towers, the donjon keep,
The loophole grates, where captives weep,
The flanking walls that round it sweep,
In yellow lustre shone.
The warriors on the turrets high,
Moving athwart the evening sky,
Seem'd forms of giant height:
Their armour, as it caught the rays,
Flash'd back again the western blaze,
In lines of dazzling light.

"Saint George's banner, broad and gay,
Now faded, as the fading ray
Less bright, and less, was flung;
The evening gale had scarce the power
To wave it on the Donjon Tower,
So heavily it hung. *****
Above the gloomy portal arch,
Timing his footsteps to a march,
The Warder kept his guard; *****

"A distant trampling sound he hears;
 He looks abroad, and soon appears,
 O'er Hornclyff-hill a plump of spears,
 Beneath a pennon gay;
 A horseman, darting from the crowd,
 Like lightning from a summer cloud,
 Spurs on his mettled courser proud,
 Before the dark array."¹

First we see the gleam of the sinking sun on walls and on flashing armour; next the fading banner, "less bright, and less"; then the "gloomy portal arch"; and lastly the horseman darting "like lightning" from the dark "plump" of spears. At every stage the tone is true. The landscape literally fades from our sight in the long twilight.

Something has already been said of Scott's use of contrasting values to give emphasis and striking quality to his descriptions. Generally speaking, Scott's descriptions are true in values. That is to say, the pictures which he produces contain a relationship of light and shade which is near enough that of nature to produce the effect of reality. The process does not, however, stop here. The descriptions present pictures in which emphasis on striking and characteristic aspects produces a strong singleness of effect. In other words, Scott's pictures are, as Rembrandt's, strong in values, which quality, as it involves artistic selection, and the element of personality, takes them a step beyond mere imitative truth.

¹Marmion, Canto I; I, II, III.

Without disagreeable prominence of artifice, Scott follows, in the description of the prospect from Rose Bradwardine's bower, one of the chief rules for the successful handling of contrasting values. The reader is asked to note how all the tones described, lead the eye insensibly to the lightest part of the picture - Loch Veolan - which part, in accord with the pronouncements of critics of pictorial art, is approximately in the center of the field portrayed. "A projecting turret gave access to this Gothic balcony, which commanded a most beautiful prospect. The formal garden, with its high bounding walls, lay below, contracted, as it seemed, to a mere parterre; while the view extended beyond them down a wooded glen, where the small river was sometimes visible, sometimes hidden in copse. The eye might be delayed by a desire to rest on the rocks, which here and there rose from the dell with massive or spiry fronts, or it might dwell on the noble, though ruined tower, which was here beheld, in all its dignity, frowning from a promontory over the river. To the left were seen two or three cottages,- a part of the village; the brow of the hill concealed the others. The glen, or dell, was terminated by a sheet of water called Loch Veolan, into which the brook discharged itself, and which now glistened in the western sun. The distant country seemed open and varied in surface, though not wooded; and there was nothing to interrupt the view until the scene was bounded by a ridge of distant and blue hills, which formed the southern boundary of the strath or valley."¹ It is probable that Scott realized the advantage of leading the eye toward the highest value; for he says: "The eye might be delayed by a desire to rest," or "might

¹ Waverly, Vol. I, pp. 111, 112.

dwell." He takes care, however, that the delay does not become permanent, and leads the attention successfully to the objective point, beyond which the blue hills form at once a satisfying boundary, and a restfully dim and varied barrier in which the gazes of the observer are lost.

Passages are common in Scott which exhibit knowledge of the striking effect to be produced by a judicious emphasis of contrasting values. The note of highest pitch is often the gleam of moonbeam on crag or ruined turret, as in the description of the scene of Dalgetty's retreat from the blood-hounds of Argyll: "The moon gleamed on the broken path-way, and on the projecting cliffs of rock round which it winded, its light intercepted here and there by the branches of bushes and dwarf-trees, which, finding nourishment in the crevices of the rocks, in some places overshadowed the brow and ledge of the precipice. Below, a thick copse-wood lay in deep and dark shadows, somewhat resembling the billows of a half-seen ocean."¹

Often the gleam of firelight² or torchlight gives the animating touch. "The scene was inexpressibly animating.***** Often he thought of his friend Dudley the artist when he observed the effect produced by the strong red glare on the romantic banks under which the boat glided. Now the light diminished to a distant star that seemed to twinkle on the waters, like those which, according to the legends of the country, the water-kelpy sends for the purpose of indicating the watery grave of his victims. Then it advanced nearer,

¹ A Legend of Montrose, p. 190.

² As in the description of the dusky interior, which begins paragraph two, of the first chapter of Volume II, Old Mortality.

brightening and enlarging as it again approached, till the broad flickering flame rendered bank and rock and tree visible as it passed, tinging them with its own red glare of dusky light, and resigning them gradually to darkness or to pale moonlight, as it receded. By this light were seen also the figures in the boat, ***** bronzed by the same red glare."¹

Often Scott shows that he realizes that the matter of values is a relative one. In the description, in Guy Mannering, of the scene viewed by Brown on the morning after his enforced lodging in the Kaim of Derncleugh, the difference of pitch shown by the contrast of snow and blackened wall is emphasized: "The pale light of a winter's morning was rendered more clear by the snow. ***** The dell was so narrow that the trees met in some places from the opposite sides. They were now loaded with snow instead of leaves, and thus formed a sort of frozen canopy over the rivulet beneath, which was marked by its darker color as it soaked its way obscurely through wreaths of snow. ***** The ruined gables [of the hamlet], the insides of which were japanned with turf-smoke, looked yet blacker, contrasted with the patches of snow which had been driven against them by the wind, and with the drifts which lay around them."²

Similar examples of the added effectiveness of contrast when the juxtaposition of contrasted values is immediate, and allowed to

¹Guy Mannering, Vol. I, pp. 229, 230. It should be noted that though this description deals with color, the contrast is really in light and shade. Red is used here not as a source of color in the picture, but as a vivid light, which defined, to a greater or less degree, the objects upon which it fell.

²Ibid., p. 255

stand unhindered by the association of irrelevant details, may be multiplied by the reader of Scott.¹ It remains, however, to suggest one further aspect of his effective handling of values, before we turn to the discussion of his perception of color.

It is now universally accepted that we are unable to paint light. We may approximate its effect by darkening the surrounding tones, thereby precluding the possibility of an imitatively true scale of values,² while we at the same time approach the effect of truth. This convention, or device, is so common that we have ceased to regard it, in our criticism, as one of the obstacles which the expert painter must successfully surmount. In painting, or drawing (in tone), the side of a room and an open window through which light enters, the artist darkens the tone of the wall beyond its actual depth, so that the contrast between the light and the dark may approach (it can do no more) the true contrast. And, if there be no more of a problem than this, his task is not particularly difficult, because, notwithstanding the fact that he must fabricate a range of values actually different from the real, he has yet but one range to deal with. Let him, however, set a lighted lantern near the open window. The problem becomes immediately complicated. There is now necessity for another and different scale of values, and if the lantern's light is to be represented along with the daylight, the artist

¹ The descriptions of Melrose, at the end of Canto I, and the beginning of Canto II, The Lay of the Last Minstrel, and the stormy picture of Loch Skene, Marmion, Canto II, Introduction, are among those which might be suggested.

² Ruskin, Modern Painters, Vol. IV, pp. 35 to 54, discusses this matter at length.

must reconcile the two scales, and use them together.¹ That Scott is sensible of these aspects of light and shade, is made evident by passages of which the following are typical: "Two human figures darkened with their shadows the entrance of the chancel which had before opened to the moonlight meadow beyond, and the small lantern which one of them displayed, glimmered pale in the clear and strong beams of the moon, as the evening star does in the lights of the departing day."²

A similar contrast of artificial and natural light, though in this instance the latter is that of the sun instead of the moon, is clearly shown in the following picture of the library of Glenallan House.

"The Earl of Glenallan was therefore seated in an apartment hung with black cloth, which waved in dusky folds along its lofty walls. A screen, also covered with black baize, placed toward the high and narrow window, intercepted much of the broken light which found its way through the stained glass, that represented, with such skill as the fourteenth century possessed, the life and sorrows of the Prophet Jeremiah. The table at which the Earl was seated was lighted with two lamps wrought in silver, shedding that unpleasant and doubtful light which arises from the mingling of artificial lustre with that of general daylight."³

In a word, Scott's descriptions are true in tone, and both true (in the larger sense) and strong in values. He exhibits often a clear understanding of the nature of perspective, for all his de-

¹ This is, of course, the more easily observed if objects upon which the two lights fall, are also represented.

² The Antiquary, Vol. I, p. 277.

³ Ibid., Vol. II, p. 85.

nials of skill in its use in actual drawing. He gives also, at times, surprising evidence of a perception of the quality of light and of shadow. It has been shown before in these pages that he had little right to the title of an artist in line. If his descriptions have the quality of etchings, yet they are the work of a painter-etcher, - one who works with a sweep of shadow and a gleam of light, setting aside contour for effect, and detail for meaning - rather than that of a painstaking delineator of outline and structure. One rarely thinks of Scott as drawing with pen-and-ink. Pen-and-ink means limited size and limited sweep of effect. One sees him with the brush and canvas, representing by mass rather than by line, and dealing with nature in the large. There is a bigness, a sweep, in his pictures, that makes up for their lack of exact detail. There is a meaning, a life in his work that surpasses, in its field, the work of all his successors.

IV. SCOTT'S PERCEPTION OF COLOR.

There is no phase of Sir Walter Scott's art consciousness more easily discernible than his feeling for color. Ruskin, in a somewhat long, and closely reasoned discussion of Scott's literary and artistic insight, speaks of color as a "leading element" in Scott's love of beauty,¹ and goes on to say that the reason, or one of the principal reasons, for Scott's power effectively to set forth color, was his gift in the suggestion² of form. Although some of Scott's pictures are chiefly pieces of color, it may safely be said that color predominates in his descriptions only when it seems to him to be the chief, or most striking aspect of the scene described.

¹ Modern Painters, Vol. III, p. 289 ff. "And in this love of beauty observe, that (as I said we might expect) the love of colour is a leading element, his healthy mind being incapable of losing, under any modern false teaching, its joy in brilliancy of hue. Though not so subtle a colourist as Dante, which, under the circumstances of the age, he could not be, he depends quite as much upon colour for his power or pleasure. And, in general, if he does not mean to say much about things, the one character which he will give is colour, using it with the most perfect mastery and faithfulness, up to the point of possible modern perception. For instance, if he has a sea storm to paint in a single line, he does not, as a feebler poet would probably have done, use any expression about the temper or form of the waves; does not call them angry or mountainous. He is content to strike them out with two dashes of Tintoret's favourite colours:

'The blackening wave is edged with white,

To inch and rock the seamews fly.'

There is no form in this. Nay, the main virtue of it is that it gets rid of all form." Ruskin devotes several pages to the discussion from which the above paragraph is taken, treating interestingly the effect of Scott's environment and character upon his artistry.

² Discussed in preceding pages (Chapter II).

In the main, however, Scott and Ruskin agree on the matter of color.¹

There are two main aspects of Scott's descriptions in which his handling of color is remarkable. The first of these is that which Ruskin points out as his "mastery" of color.² This power to suggest much with little, involves keen perception, feeling for pictorial effect, and above all, fidelity to nature. The single touch of color in the picture of the minstrel's hut gives, by its judicious placing near the garden, which one instinctively feels to be dark, color to the whole description:

"Close between proud Newark's tower,
Arose the Minstrel's lowly bower;

¹ The following comparison will suggest the relative positions of the two men: Ruskin (Modern Painters, Vol. V, p. 349, n., ff.), in speaking of fidelity in color as a necessity, observes: "Though color is of less importance than form, if you introduce it at all, it must be right." Scott (Ivanhoe, Dedicatory Epistle, p.1) says: "His [the author's] general colouring, too, must be copied from Nature: the sky must be clouded or serene, according to the climate, and the general tints must be those which prevail in a natural landscape. So far the painter is bound down by the rules of his art, to a precise imitation of the features of Nature; but it is not required that he should descend to copy all her more minute features." Ruskin speaks of absolute fidelity. Scott proposes such fidelity as is necessary to assist the imagination of the reader to the conception desired, - no less, and no more. Should the reader be interested in following the artistic relationship of Scott and Ruskin, he is referred to: Modern Painters, Vol. III, p. 274 ff.; Vol. V, p. 348, n. ff.; Praeterita, Vol. I, pp. 134, 251 (and a large number of passing references in Praeterita). No very close parallel will be reached, though much interesting information, especially on Ruskin's attitude toward Scott, will be found.

² In this discussion, (Modern Painters, Vol. III, pp. 289-293), Ruskin quotes eleven examples from Scott's poetry, making the following points regarding Scott's color: First, that Scott's color-treatment gains in effect by the absence of definite form; secondly, that while Scott's form is indistinct, his color is definite (cf. Ruskin's theory of color, recapitulated in Modern Painters, Vol. V, pp. 349-353 n.); thirdly, that Scott produced beautiful "chords" of color; and fourthly, that the color in Scott's descriptions is enhanced by the delicate element of personification that is usually present.

A simple hut; but there was seen
 The little garden hedged with green,
 The cheerful hearth, the lattice clean."¹

The passage just quoted illustrates one characteristic of Scott's color method; he is expert in suggesting color by one or two touches on a background provided, through his magic, instinctively and unconsciously by the reader. In the following couplet, the color of the heath is the background, the touch of blue the accent:

"And July's eve, with balmy breath,
 Waved the blue bells on Newark heath."²

Again, in a single touch, vivid against the green with which the reader unconsciously fills the background, glow the berries of the rowan:

"How clung the rowan to the rock,
 And through the foliage showed his head,
 With narrow leaves and berries red."³

The words foliage and leaves produce the background, and the red berries tell the more vividly for the artist's restraint. It were easy to multiply passages in which this artifice is used. "Thousand pavilions, white as snow," spread the moor, or chequer the heath;⁴ the heather "black" holds the copse "in rivalry";⁵ the "lowering" clouds give to the lake a "livid" blue;⁶ whether there is contrast between suggested and definite color, or close relation, as in the dark cloud and its reflection in the lake, the method is the same.

¹ The Lay of the Last Minstrel, Canto VI, XXXI.

² *Ibid.*, XXXI.

³ Marmion, Canto II, Introduction.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Canto IV, XXV.

⁵ The Lady of the Lake, Canto V, III.

⁶ *Ibid.*, Canto VI, XIX.

Two definite touches of color - purple, and vivid yellow - vermilion (living fire) - give vividness to the following romantic picture:

"The western waves of ebbing day
 Roll'd o'er the glen their level way;
 Each purple peak, each flinty spire,
 Was bathed in floods of living fire,
 But not a setting beam could glow
 Within the dark ravines below,
 Where twined the path in shadow hid,
 Round many a rocky pyramid."¹

A similar vividness, produced by two touches of color, marks the sketch of Loch Katrine in sunset:

"And thus an airy power he won,
 Where, gleaming with the setting sun,
One burnished sheet of living gold,
 Loch Katrine lay beneath him roll'd,
 In all her length far winding lay,
 With promontory, creek, and bay,
 And islands that, empurpled bright,
 Floated amid the livelier light,
 And mountains, that like giants stand,
 To sentinel enchanted land."²

Scott's fondness for brilliant colors is often manifested in

¹ The Lady of the Lake, Canto I, XI.

² Ibid., Canto I, XIV.

The italics in these passages are my own.

passages like the ones just quoted, in which the key is set by purple and gold, or by scarlet and gold, as, of the standard:

"Gave to view the dazzling field,
Where, in proud Scotland's royal shield,
The ruddy lion ramp'd in gold."¹

It will be observed that in the sketch of the standard also, the definite touches of color are two in number. However, whether the restraint is extreme, as in the one-touch or two-touch pictures, or whether the artist permits his fancy a little more exuberant expression, the descriptions never descend to inventories; there is never more than enough to spur and enlighten the imagination; and the one who reads is often amazed to find how simple the means by which are presented scenes of unusual mystery or brilliance and power.

Nor are the pictures always high in key. In contrast to the purple and scarlet and living gold, are hues like those of the picture of Dun Edin (quoted above, page 21).

"The wandering eye could o'er it go,
And mark the distant city glow
With gloomy splendour red;
For on the smoke-wreaths, huge and slow,
That round her sable turrets flow,
The morning beams were shed,
And tinged them with a lustre proud,
Like that which streaks a thunder-cloud."²

¹ Marmion, Canto IV, XXVIII.

² Ibid., XXX.

Still less brilliant than the picture of Dun Edin's dusky glow, is that of the sylvan shades of Turnberry Park. The reader will note that the scene is not dark, but that the colors are low in key; and that there are but three touches of actual color, one of brown, and two of green, though dark suggests color.

"But then, soft swept in velvet green
 The plain with many a glade between
 Whose tangled alleys far invade
 The depth of the brown forest shade.
 Here the tall fern obscured the lawn,
 Fair shelter for the sportive fawn;
 There, tufted close with copsewood green,
 Was many a swelling hillock seen;
 And all around was verdure meet
 For pressure of the fairies' feet.
 The glossy holly loved the park,
 The yew-tree lent its shadow dark."¹

Scott's prose also illustrates this first aspect of his color handling,- the power to put his few touches of color in so telling a manner that their fewness is unperceived. The single touch of color which enlivens the picture of the tower of Geierstein seems all that is needed to relieve the dark and somber character of the scene. "It was on all sides surrounded by lofty hills, in some places rising into walls of rock, in others clothed with dark and savage forests of the pine and the larch, of primeval antiquity. Above these, from the eminence on which the tower was situated, could be seen the almost rosy hue in which an immense glacier threw back the sun; and still higher

¹ The Lord of the Isles, Canto V, XIX.

over the surface of that icy sea arose, in silent dignity, the pale peaks of those countless mountains, on which the snow eternally rests."¹ It is true that dark and pale mark the scale of values of the picture; yet their task is more with the savage wildness of the scene than with its color. Rosy gives a touch of warmth upon a field of dark, cool color, and, from its placing, performs many of the offices of full color.

The same "masterly" economy of means is exhibited in many of the shorter descriptions in the Novels. "The thin mists were not totally dispersed in the glen, so that it was often through their gauzy medium that the eye strove to discover the motions of the hunters below. Sometimes a breath of wind made the scene visible, the blue rill glittering as it twined itself through its rude and solitary dell."² Again: "The site was a beautiful green knoll, which started up suddenly in the very throat of a wild and narrow glen, and which, being surrounded, except on one side, by the winding of a small stream, afforded a position of considerable strength."³ Or: "The level surface of the lake, undisturbed except by the occasional dipping of a teal-duck, or coot, was gilded with the beams of the setting luminary, and reflected, as if in a golden mirror, the hills amongst which it lay embosomed."⁴

The same simplicity of means, astonishing when compared with the brilliancy and completeness of color-effect produced, marks the descriptions of persons in the Waverly Novels. Of Quentin Durward, the author says: "His complexion was fair. ***** His short grey

¹Anne of Geierstein, Vol. I, p. 50.

²Guy Mannering, Vol. I, p. 226.

³The Monastery, Vol. I, p. 9.

⁴The Abbot, Vol. I, pp. 6, 7.

The italics in these passages are my own.

cloak and hose were rather of Flemish than of French fashion, while the smart blue bonnet, with a single sprig of holly and an eagle's feather, was already recognized as the Scottish headgear. His dress was very neat. *** He had at his back a satchel. *** Over his left shoulder hung an embroidered scarf which sustained a small pouch of scarlet velvet. *** This was crossed by another shoulder-belt, to which was hung a hunting knife, or coteau de chasse. Instead of the boots of the period, he wore buskins of half-dressed deer's-skin."¹ The grey, blue, and scarlet of this detailed sketch harmonize well with the fair skin of the young gallant (though to speak of harmony is to anticipate the second division of this discussion); the simplicity of their handling, - first the sweep of grey (cloak and hose) into which are crisply touched the blue of the bonnet, (lighter in tone than the grey), and the scarlet of the velvet pouch (darker than the grey), gives the last sparkle of vividness to the sketch.

Higher in key, and equally vivid, the portrait of Ludovic Lesly, with its ringing chord of blue, white, and silver, shows the artistry of its author. "His dress and arms were splendid. He wore his national bonnet, crested with a tuft of feathers, and with a Virgin Mary of massive silver for a brooch. ***** The Archer's gorget, arm-pieces, and gauntlets, were of the finest steel, curiously inlaid with silver, and his hauberk, or shirt of mail, was as clear and bright as the frostwork of a winter morning upon fern or brier. He wore a loose surcoat, or cassock, of rich blue velvet *** with a large white St. Andrew's cross of embroidered silver bisecting it before and behind - his knees and legs were protected by hose of mail and shoes of steel ***."²

¹ Quentin Durward, Vol. I, p. 13. ² Ibid., pp. 55, 56.

It were useless to multiply illustrations either of Scott's power to suggest color or to set it forth with the simplicity and sureness of complete understanding of pictorial effect. The beautiful figure of Rowena,¹ with its complexion "exquisitely fair," the "clear blue eye," the "graceful eyebrow of brown," the "profuse hair, of a colour betwixt brown and flaxen," the silken crimson, the scarlet, gold, and pale sea-green of her costume, a symphony of warm colors relieved with one cool color (green), will come to the mind of the reader of Scott as an example of completeness as well as harmony in color effect; the somber hues of the portrait of the unfortunate Murray,² deep buff, gold, black, pearl, and silver - will be remembered as among those portraits exemplifying Scott's richness in the lower ranges of color; the portraits of De La Marck,³ of Miss Griselda Oldbuck,⁴ of Rebecca,⁵ all remarkable for their statement and suggestion of color, are but a few of the many which will instantly present themselves to the lover and reader of Scott, as examples of the sureness of his instinct in this aspect of his artistic power.

The second main aspect of Scott's color-treatment is that of color relation,- called usually harmony of color. Harmony is often confused with tone. The difference between the two is, however, fundamental. While both are matters of relation, tone is (setting aside for the moment monochrome) the relation of color quantity; harmony, on the other hand, is the relation of color quality. This relation of color quality is difficult to separate in the work of Scott, from any other aspect of his color handling. This fact may be better ap-

¹Ivanhoe, Vol. I, pp. 49 ff.

²The Monastery, Vol. II, p.259.

³Quentin Durward.

⁴The Antiquary.

⁵Ivanhoe.

preciated when the reader recalls that in the few examples in preceding pages cited chiefly to illustrate Scott's economy of color, harmony often made itself so felt that it could not be ignored.

An attempt to hew Scott to fit any particular Procrustean bed of color-theory, such as the complementary-juxtaposition theory, or the warm-color-relieved-by-cold, will not meet with glowing success. As a matter of fact, few artists will fit a color theory, let their admirers pull and slash never so zealously. If there is a system of color relation which Scott will fit, it is the warm color - cold color one.¹ However, as we learn more of actual harmony by observing the effects of nature and the performances of art than by theorizing, although the attempt to classify is, in its own field (constructive criticism) valuable, so will we proceed more profitably in the study of Scott's color harmony by examining his descriptions, than by seeking passages which seem to accord with abstract aesthetic principles.

Scott's color harmony is chiefly illustrated in what Ruskin calls "chords."² The long narrative poems contain many passages remarkable for play of color.

"Each puny wave in diamonds roll'd

O'er the calm deep, where hues of gold

With azure strove and green.

¹ In which all colors are divided (by association) into the two classes. The "relief" of a mass of warm color by a mass of cold color either more or less in volume, is said to produce the harmony. This principle is related aesthetically to that providing inequality of mass as a necessity for symmetry (of which principle composition is a development).

² Of the description of Edinburgh (quoted above) and of the next few lines, Ruskin (Modern Painters, Vol. III, p. 291) says: "But the colours are all definite; note the rainbow band of them - gloomy or dusky red, sable (pure black), amethyst (pure purple), green, and gold - a noble chord throughout."

The hill, the vale, the tree, the tower,
 Glow'd with the tints of evening's hour,
 The beach was silver sheen."¹

Note the progression of tint, through the white luster of the diamond, through gold, azure, green, orange (sunset color), back to the silver of the beach. The color vibrates; it seems actually to shimmer, as the hues of gold reconcile the azure and the green, and the silvery beach relieves the rich "tints of evening's hour."

Beautiful also in color relation is the scene which spread itself before Bertram as he rested in Scargill Wood:

"'Twas silence all - he laid him down,
 Where purple heath profusely strown,
 And moss and thyme his cushion swell,
 There, spent with toil, he listless eyed
 The course of Greta's playful tide;
 Beneath, her banks now eddying dun,
 Now brightly gleaming to the sun,
 As, dancing over rock and stone,
 In yellow light her currents shone,
 Matching in hue the favorite gem
 Of Albin's mountain-diadem.
 Then, tired to watch the current's play,
 He turn'd his weary eyes away,
 To where the bank opposing show'd
 Its huge, square cliffs through shaggy wood.
 One, prominent above the rest,
 Rear'd to the sun its pale gray breast;

¹ The Lord of the Isles, Canto IV, XIII.

Around its broken summit grew
 The hazel rude, and sable yew;
 A thousand varied lichens dyed
 Its waste and weather-beaten side,
 And round its rugged basis lay,
 By time or thunder rent away,
 Fragments, that, from its frontlet torn,
 Were mantled now by verdant thorn."¹

Purple, citrine, luminous yellow broken by the gleam of rapidly running water, relieve pale gray, black, verdant green; and the thousand varied lichen dyes unite the harmony, exquisitely delicate, vibrant and clear.

Few passages in the poems illustrate more clearly than the following, what may be called (borrowing somewhat from the terminology of music) ascending harmony. The color begins in the deepest ranges, and proceeds through the gray of the birch, and the deep green of the pine, to the dazzling white of the mountain peaks, and the blue of the sky, so brilliant that the unprotected vision shrinks from their intensity.

"Here eglantine embalm'd the air,
 Hawthorn and hazel mingled there;
 The primrose pale and violet flower,
 Found in each cliff a narrow bower;
 Fox-glove and night-shade, side by side,
 Emblems of punishment and pride,
 Group'd their dark hues with every stain

¹ Rokeby, Canto III, VIII. The italics are my own.

The weather-beaten crags retain.
 With boughs that quaked at every breath,
 Gray birch and aspen wept beneath;
 Aloft, the ash and warrior oak
 Cast anchor in the rifted rock;
 And, higher yet, the pine-tree hung
 His shattered trunk, *****
 Highest of all, where white peaks glanced
 Where glist'ning streamers waved and danced,
 The wanderer's eye could barely view
 The summer heaven's delicious blue."¹

The transitions in the passage just given are especially to be remarked. As, in the description of Scargill Wood, the sable color of the yew passes in transition, through the varied dye of thousand lichens, to the note of verdant green struck by the thorn, here the "dark hues" of fox-glove and night-shade mingle with the weather-beaten tones only less dark, of the crags; ascending still, the melody of color touches the delicate grays and greens of birch and aspen, moves upward through the gray of the rifted rock, to the sun-burnished green of the pine, and the dazzling peaks and sky. Surely here is harmony.

Though in many respects less dependent upon color effect for the success of its imagery, the prose is not without illustrations of harmonious color. Observe the almost portentous grandeur of the sunset on Halket Head: "The sun was now resting his huge disk upon the edge of the level ocean, and gilded the accumulation of towering

¹ The Lady of the Lake, Canto I, XII.

clouds through which he had travelled the livelong day, and which now assembled on all sides, like misfortunes and disasters around a sinking empire and falling monarch. Still, however, his dying splendour gave a sombre magnificence to the massive congregation of vapours forming out of their unsubstantial gloom, the show of pyramids and towers, some touched with gold, some with purple, some with a hue of deep and dark red. The distant sea, stretched beneath this varied and gorgeous canopy, lay almost portentously still, reflecting back the dazzling and level beams of the descending luminary and the splendid coloring of the clouds amidst which he was setting. Nearer to the beach, the tide rippled onward in waves of sparkling silver that imperceptibly, yet rapidly, gained upon the sand."¹ There is in this picture, it is true, somewhat of that faint element of personification which Ruskin puts as inseparable from Scott's descriptive temper,² adding melancholy to the scene; yet the colors minister to this effect (purple, deep red and dazzling gold,- the lighter and more broken tints of the cloud joining with the cool, sparkling silver to relieve the almost oppressive weight of the heavier colors), and are still harmonious the while.

A simpler harmony than that of the sunset just discussed, appears in the description, in "fading daylight" of Arnheim: "The road he pursued descended into a beautiful ampitheatre filled with large trees, which protected from the heats of summer the delicate and tender herbage of the pasture. ***** A part of the savannah that has

¹ The Antiquary, Vol. I, p. 84.

² Modern Painters, Vol. III, pp. 286, 294, 295.

been mentioned had been irregularly cultivated for wheat, which had grown a plentiful crop. It was gathered in, but the patches of deep yellow stubble contrasted with the green of the undisturbed pasture land, and with the seared and dark-red foliage of the broad oaks which stretched their arms athwart the level space."¹ Here the contrasting colors are broadly and softly brushed in, as befits those of a scene wherein the sharpness of form and definition is blurred by twilight. The prevailing tones are near each other in strength: deep yellow, green and dusky red, which in foliage has always the remnant, in its depths, of both yellow and green, from its previous and more natural color.

Occupying a ground somewhat between the splendour of sunset and the dusk of twilight, the description of Glendearg (the red vale, or dene) shows well the sureness of relation and pleasing contrast which mark Scott's daylight pictures. "Yet the glen, though lonely, nearly inaccessible, and sterile, was not then absolutely void of beauty. The turf which covered the small portion of level ground on the sides of the stream, was as close and verdant as if it had occupied the scythes of a hundred gardeners once a-fortnight; and it was garnished with an embroidery of daisies and wild flowers, which the scythes would certainly have destroyed. ***** The mountains *****rose abruptly over the little glen, here presenting the grey face of a rock, from which the turf had been peeled by the torrents, and there displaying patches of wood and copse, ***** which, feathering naturally up the beds of empty torrents, or occupying the concave recesses

¹ Anne of Geierstein, Vol. II, pp. 50, 51. Lockhart relates that Scott's descriptions of Swiss and German scenery, produced solely from reading and from inquiries among friends who had travelled in these countries, were much admired by the natives themselves.

of the bank, gave at once beauty and variety to the landscape. Above these scattered woods rose the hill, in barren, but purple majesty; the dark rich hue, particularly in autumn, contrasting beautifully with the thickets of oak and birch, the mountain ashes and thorns, the alders and quivering aspens, which chequered and varied the descent, and not less with the dark-green and velvet turf, which composed the level part of the narrow glen."¹ The delicate harmony of greens in this picture,² relieved as it is by the darker and richer hues of the rock and purple, barren hill, forms one of the most beautiful and sympathetic color passages in the Waverly Novels.

But perhaps enough illustrations to show the two aspects of Scott's color-handling, have been given. Mention even of the major color passages in the fiction would require a volume. It is in harmonies such as the picture with which I will close this chapter, that Scott's romantic fancy expresses itself best in color. In the Zetland lake's vibrating chord of color, Scott's sureness and simplicity of touch appear inseparable from the beautiful quality and relation of the hues. "Embosomed among steep, heathy hills, ***** the little lake, not three-quarters of a mile in circuit, lay in profound quiet; its surface undimpled, save when one of the numerous water-fowl which glided on its surface dived for an instant under it. The depth of the

¹ The Monastery, Vol. I, pp. 10, 11.

² There are mentioned here, as the reader will observe, eight different tones of green: those of the copse, turf, oaks, birch, ash, thorn, alder, and aspen. Compare also "pallid green" in the first paragraph of Chapter VIII, The Monastery. It is perhaps unnecessary to remind the reader of Scott's lifelong love of trees - in fact of all the vegetation of his native land - a love which led him always to rove the woods and hills, and which provided him with an unlimited store from which to draw delicate distinctions such as the ones in question.

water gave to the whole that cerulean tint of bluish-green which occasioned its being called the Green Loch; and at present it formed so perfect a mirror to the bleak hills by which it was surrounded, and which lay reflected on its bosom, that it was difficult to distinguish the water from the land; nay, in the shadowy uncertainty occasioned by the thin haze a stranger could scarce have been sensible that a sheet of water lay before him. A scene of more complete solitude, having all its peculiarities heightened by the extreme serenity of the weather, the quiet, gray, composed tone of the atmosphere, and the perfect silence of the elements, could hardly be imagined."¹ Add to the deep blue, the green and the gray, the dulled, yet dimly glowing beams of the summer sun through the "silver haze *** that gave even to noon the sober livery of evening twilight," and there glows before us not only a scene of mystic and appealing beauty, but also a type of the romantic northern landscape which Scott loved, and which molded his love of nature.

In a word, Scott's color-treatment is marked by keen perception of close relations of color, as well as by a remarkable sense of contrast. His productions show a workmanlike crispness of touch, sureness, sympathy, and a very unusual feeling for economy of color in the production of vivid effects. He is not a colorist, in the strictest sense of the term; for if he were, color, now subordinate to the mood and meaning of his pictures, would be supreme. With this reservation, however, it may well be said that his color sense is the chief characteristic of his art consciousness.

¹ The Pirate, Vol. I, p. 148.

V. SCOTT'S PERCEPTION OF PICTORIAL COMPOSITION.

The purpose of pictorial composition is the production of unified effect. In that one term are comprehended all the requisites of this difficult department of graphic art.

At the basis of successful pictorial composition is always a sense of wholeness. The artist conceiving his picture must conceive it entire,— not fully detailed, but complete in fundamental respects. To illustrate this point, one has but to remember seeing a child draw the figure of a man. The youthful draughtsman almost always starts with detail; a head, or an arm, or even a single feature is drawn first, and the man, and his surroundings, are added bit by bit, out of all perspective and proportion. And why? Because the draughtsman has failed to conceive in the whole. The experienced draughtsman observes carefully the leading direction of the figure, making simple preliminary sweeps which comprehend the whole. After he has recorded his unified conception, he will draw into the leading lines and broadly sketched proportionate areas, such detail as he feels necessary to minister to the effect desired.

After the picture has been conceived in its entirety, the task of allotment of parts presents itself. In every unified picture (or poem or drama or statue) there is a main theme, or purpose, even if it be but to show how sweetly the summer sun sinks behind the hill (in my poor judgment a purpose homelier and more artistically profitable than many from whose dubious accomplishment we cannot, in these latter days, escape). "There is a perfect analogy

between any good play, poem, or novel and a well composed picture. They all depend upon the force of some leading character; they all use subordinate characters as the supporters of the hero or heroine; they all sacrifice the less to enhance the brilliancy of the greater."¹ The same need which called for bigness and wholeness of conception, calls for singleness of effect.

To produce this singleness (or unity) of effect, careful re-
lation of parts is needed. Agglutinative processes produce poor composition; the picture must be built, and built toward some one certain effect. This requirement calls for relation of parts. One must support the other, both must point, perhaps, to a third; the masses of light and dark must be so placed as to throw the principals (be the picture figure or landscape) into relief; the lines must lead toward the center of interest. No haphazard arrangement will answer. The meaning of each part must be instantly apprehensible, for only in this way may the meaning of the whole be seen. "Every object, light, color, shadow and effect must hold each its place and make for the general unity of the whole."²

Finally, mathematical precision of arrangement, either in landscape or figure painting, should be avoided. There should be that inequality of mass which we call balance. Objects should not be arranged in a regularly repeating pattern; they should not be placed in the exact mathematical center of the field (though the important ob-

¹ Van Dyke, J. C., How to Judge of a Picture, New York, 1889, p. 96.

² Ibid., p. 104

ject in a picture should come near the center); they should normally be presented in uneven numbers. In a word, the picture should say one thing, (though it need not be didactic), to the expression of which all its parts conduce relatedly and amicably by means of a pre-conceived plan; the plan is concerned, since painting is a space art, with the "breaking up of a space into parts which vary in shape, depth of tone, and color."¹ By this process natural forms are expressed pictorially, composed to convey a message.

In the larger aspects of artistic composition, such as wholeness of conception, unity of message, supporting relation of parts, and balance of mass, Scott's work conforms to the laws here sketched. He can scarcely be said to exhibit a sense of line composition, save insofar as the use of leading lines in landscape may be taken to mean such sense. He paints rather in mass than in line.

The first direction then, in which we may look in the works of Scott for evidence of perception of pictorial composition, is, since line is at the basis of composition, toward his use of leading lines. In the description of the cliffs and sea before the storm which imperilled the lives of Sir Arthur Wardour and Isabella, after picturing the somber magnificence of the sunset, Scott proceeds: "Following the windings of the beach, they passed one projecting point or headland of rock after another, and now found themselves under a huge and continued extent of the precipices by which that ironbound coast is in most places defended. Long projecting reefs of rock, extending under water, and only evincing their existence by here and there a

¹ Dow, Arthur W., Composition, Boston, 1899, p. 16.

peak entirely bare, or by the breakers which foamed over those that were partially covered, rendered Knockwinnock bay dreaded by pilots and shipmasters. [Observe how the long lines of half-submerged rock lead the eye to the cliffs]. The crags which rose between the beach and the mainland, to the height of two or three hundred feet, afforded in their crevices shelter for unnumbered sea-fowl, in situations seemingly secured by their dizzy height from the rapacity of man. Many of these wild tribes, with the instinct which sends them to seek the land before a storm arises, were now winging toward their nests with the shrill and dissonant clang which announces disquietude and fear. The disk of the sun became almost totally obscured. ***** The wind began next to arise, ***** and its effects became visible on the bosom of the sea, before the gale was felt on shore. The mass of waters, now dark and threatening, began to lift itself in larger ridges, and sink in deeper furrows, forming waves that rose high in foam upon the breakers, or burst upon the beach with a sound resembling distant thunder."¹ Besides the lines already mentioned, leading horizontally to the center of interest (the figures and the towering cliffs), there are also the downward lines made by the homing birds, and the undulating lines made by the white crests of the oncoming billows. We have here a balanced composition: a towering mass at the side of the space is balanced by a long level expanse, the center of interest (the fulcrum) being near the upright cliffs; and to this fulcrum, point three lines, leading the interest of the observer continually thither.

¹ The Antiquary, Vol. I, pp. 84, 85.

A similar use of line to lead to the point of chief interest is shown by the description of Fairy Knowe. The reader is asked to note how the single winding line of the path as it descends, past tree and hedgerow, orchard and farmhouse, leads inevitably to the scene in which Scott is for the time particularly interested, since it forms the theater of the next action in the story. "It was on a delightful summer evening that a stranger, well mounted, and having the appearance of a military man of rank, rode down a winding descent which terminated in the romantic ruins of Bothwell Castle and the river Clyde, which winds so beautifully between rocks and woods to sweep around the towers formerly built by Aymer de Valence. The opposite field, ***** now lay as placid and quiet as the surface of a summer lake. *****

"The path through which the traveller descended was occasionally shaded by detached trees of great size, and elsewhere by the hedges and boughs of flourishing orchards, now laden with summer fruits.

"The nearest object of consequence was a farmhouse, *** situated on the side of a sunny bank. ***** At the foot of the path which led up to this modest mansion was a small cottage, pretty much in the situation of a porter's lodge, though obviously not designed for such a purpose."¹ Every line in this picture leads to the cottage; the path down which Morton rode, the path from the farmhouse, the line of smoke from the chimney (spoken of a few lines farther on in the passage). The height from which the path slopes is balanced by the level line of field beyond.

¹Old Mortality, Vol. II, p. 192.

Descriptions also in which balance of mass is one of the constructive features are, as may be guessed from the passages just quoted, of frequent occurrence in Scott's work. Woodbourne is spoken of as "a large, comfortable mansion, snugly situated beneath a hill covered with wood, which shrouded the house upon the north and east." "The front looked upon a little lawn bordered by a grove of old trees," continues the narrator; and, to offset the mass of wooded hill, "beyond were some arable fields extending down to the river, which was seen from the windows of the house."¹ Again, the chapel and stream of St. Dunstan is offset by the hut with the hermit's cross, in the celebrated picture of Friar Tuck's cell, all being unified by the wooded rock, and relieved by the "open plot of turf" and "gently sloping plain" from which the rock, weatherbeaten and grey, abruptly rose.²

The Castle of Plessis-les-Tours, rising in successive terraces from its "gentle elevation," crowned by the ancient keep, shows yet another kind of balance, called by critics the "pyramid balance." "From the verge of the wood *** extended, or rather arose, though by a very gentle elevation, an open esplanade. ***** There were three external walls, *** the second enclosure arising higher than the first, *** and being again, in the same manner, itself commanded by the third and innermost barrier. ***** From within the innermost enclosure arose the Castle itself, containing buildings of different periods, crowded around, and united with the ancient and grim-looking donjon-keep, which was older than any of them, and which rose, like a black Ethiopian giant, high into the air."³ The central point of this picture,

¹ Guy Mannering, Vol. I, p. 169.

² Ivanhoe, Vol. I, p. 211 ff.

³ Quentin Durward, Vol. I, pp. 28, 29.

the donjon, rising as it does near the center of the field, dominates the interest as it does the scene. The composition, that is to say, is effective for its purpose. Many of Scott's descriptions of castles exhibit a similar balance of mass; the flanking towers of Ellangowan, with the cavernous gateway which pierced the curtain of stone between them;¹ the ancient hold of Torquilstone, with its gloomy keep and Norman outworks;² the first being a "reverse pyramid," the gateway being less high than the towers, and between them, while the second is in the same class as Plessis. These are but a few of the instances which will occur to the reader.

It is, however, in the relation of parts to enhance the principal theme, that Scott excels as an arranger of scenic effect.³ It is in this department only of pictorial composition that he may be said to be a master. His work is not without examples of other artifice to increase pictorial effect, and at all times exhibits a very marked sense of the value and appeal of the picturesque. It would be, however, too much to expect of any descriptive writer who is not also an experienced artist, that he embody in his descriptions all the actual technical aspects of the most difficult branch of art. It is to Scott's credit that his strong, though undeveloped, sense of pictorial effect manifests itself as clearly as it does. The difference in medium between description and painting must also be thought of. Language is a much broader and more facile medium for the reproduction of sense-impression than painting, and therefore capable of performance

¹ Guy Mannering.

² Ivanhoe.

³ Henderson, T. F., in the essay before quoted in this paper (Cambridge History of English Literature, Vol. XII, p. 18), alludes to Scott's "exceptional mastery of scenic arrangement."

in which perhaps not many more aspects, but quite different aspects from those left by painting, are left to imagination. This means that a parallel between description and painting cannot be pushed too far; and that the distance to which the parallel may be pushed is in direct relation to the analogy which can be drawn between the particular effects in question.

The office of relation of detail in enhancing the theme of the picture and in ministering to unity of effect, is one in which a fairly close analogy may be drawn between description, and painting or drawing. The need for emphasis is present in both fields; the method of producing this emphasis,- relation of subordinate detail - is essentially similar in one to that used in the other. It is, then, not surprising that Scott's strong, though untrained, pictorial sense manifests itself most clearly in that aspect of pictorial composition which is most closely allied to literary composition. It is unnecessary to remind the reader that Scott is chiefly interested in the meaning of nature, and that he requires of every work of art that it first present this meaning. Even his vivid sense of the picturesque is subordinated to this fundamental requirement.

Examples may perhaps illustrate best just what is meant by this last and chief aspect of Scott's ability as a "master" of scenic arrangement. In the broken light, and half-obsured, inviting vistas which, in the description of the forest of Rotherwood, are contrasted with, and through this contrast enhance the beauty of the open glade, Scott gives a good example of his power so to compose a picture that every part contributed, in true relation, and without the assumption of more importance than necessary, will help to build up the one ef-

fect desired. "The sun was setting upon one of the rich grassy glades of that forest. ***** Hundreds of broad-headed, short-stemmed, wide-branched oaks, which had witnessed perhaps the stately march of the Roman soldiery, flung their gnarled arms over a thick carpet of the most delicious green sward; in some places they were intermingled with beeches, hollies, and copsewood of various descriptions, so closely as totally to intercept the level beams of the sinking sun; in others they receded from each other, forming those long sweeping vistas, in the intricacy of which the eye delights to lose itself, while imagination considers them as paths to yet wilder scenes of sylvan solitude."¹ After giving thus, in the first few words, the fundamental image, Scott sketches the related subordinate details that are to emphasize the effect of the open glade in which his figures, the principals of the scene, are placed. "A considerable open space," the author continues, "in the midst of the glade, seemed formerly to have been dedicated to the rites of Druidical superstition; for, on the summit of a hillock, so regular as to seem artificial, there still remained part of a circle of rough, unhewn stones, of large dimensions. Seven stood upright; the rest had been dislodged from their places, probably by the zeal of some convert to Christianity, and lay, some prostrate near their former site, and others on the side of the hill. One large stone only had found its way to the bottom, and, in stopping the course of a small brook which glided smoothly round the foot of the eminence, gave, by its opposition, a feeble voice of murmur to the placid and elsewhere silent streamlet."¹ Having thus given the details

¹ Ivanhoe, Vol. I, pp. 5, 6.

of the principal part of the setting, Scott introduces the theme of the picture, in the description which begins: "The human figures which completed this landscape," adding the lively touch which figures nearly always give to his landscapes, and giving readily into the wildly sylvan character (already prepared by the picture of the glade) which marks the scene. All parts of this picture, one of the most beautiful in the Novels, support and enhance the figures. It is thus that Scott composes to give the meaning of his pictures; for it is the conversation and appearance of Wamba and Gurth that mark the true character of the scene; with these figures the march of living characters in the story begins, appropriately set off by the remains of Saxon superstition.

The same artifice is used in the description of Balfour of Burley's wild retreat. The point of principal interest is the maniacal violence of Burley's disordered faculties; and toward showing this violence all parts of the scene are bent. The decayed thicket, the rugged sheep track, and the hoarse and sullen roar of the cataract "had in part prepared [Morton] for the scene which presented itself, yet it was not to be viewed without surprise and even terror." It may be observed that the emotions just mentioned are the very ones which it is the purpose of the whole description, particularly that of Burley, to arouse. The purpose of "the ledge of flat rock, projecting over one side of a chasm not less than a hundred feet deep," the "dark mountain stream," the dizzy fall, the "deep, black, yawning gulf" into whose sheer descent and foaming turmoil the eye strove in vain to penetrate, is but to emphasize and set off the wildness of Burley's madness and retreat: "But crossing in the very front of the

fall, and at scarce three yards distance from the cataract, an old oak tree, flung across the chasm in a manner that seemed accidental, formed a bridge of fearfully narrow dimensions and uncertain footing. The upper end of the tree rested on the platform on which they stood; the lower or uprooted extremity extended behind a projection on the opposite side, and was secured, Morton's eye could not discover where. From behind the same projection glimmered a strong red light, which, glancing in the waves of the falling water, and tinging them partly with crimson, had a strange preternatural and sinister effect when contrasted with the beams of the rising sun, which glanced upon the first broken waves of the fall, though even its meridian splendour could not gain the third of its full depth." Thus Scott prepares the mind, by the natural wildness of the scene, and by the supernatural terror of the glow upon the rushing water, for the desperate exclamations and grisly figure of the murderer, which, "dimly ruddied by the light of the red charcoal, seemed that of a fiend in the lurid atmosphere of Pandemonium."¹ There are few better examples than this of Scott's masterly subordination of all points of the picture to its principal effect. It would be easy to multiply examples; in fact, there are practically no descriptions in the Waverly Novels in which it would be possible to arrange details for emphasis of principal effect, that do not exhibit such arrangement.

The results of the investigation recorded in this and the preceding chapters may be summarized briefly thus: Scott had a very strong artistic sense, which would have, had he studied longer, probably made him a graphic artist. That Lockhart is, however, right in saying that this would have resulted in injury to Scott's literary

¹ Old Mortality, Vol. II, pp. 271 ff.

ability can hardly be doubted. Scott's graphic artistic sense must, then, be set down as essentially untrained. His perception of form is clear; his perception of contrast in light and shade is vivid; his color-sense is very remarkable; and his perception of pictorial composition is, as we have seen, marked by love of the picturesque, and exceedingly effective emphasis of theme. The sense of color is the chief aspect of his art sense, light and shade perhaps next, and form and composition secondary to the other two. It is my belief that Scott's romantic point of view is reflected by the preponderance of color and light and shade in his artistic consciousness; for in what does romance lie if not in brilliancy and mystery, the realm of color and shadow? If this belief be true, as I have tried to show it in these pages to be, then Scott was an artist, graphic in all but the accident of manual skill, and in the larger elements of sympathy, keenness of perception, fidelity, selection, emphasis, unity,- in the essential elements of art, great and true.

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*See also the autobiographical fragment, Lockhart, Life, Vol. I.

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